

CURRENT NOTES

Helping Atari Owners Through the World of Computing

Vol. 14, No. 2

March '94

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In this Issue:

- Geneva Multitasking
- Music and Technology
- Imagecopy 2
- Naked Atari Developers
- Advanced 8-Bit Graphics
- 8-Bits Take on Wayne's World
- A Systems View of Language

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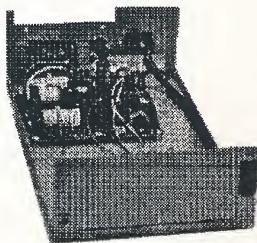
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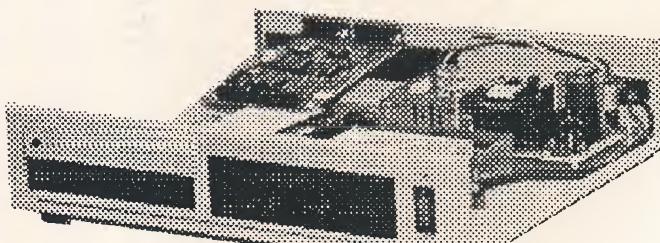
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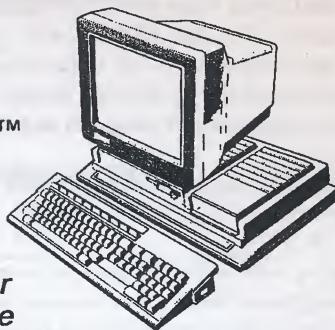
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From the Editor's Desk

Last month I spent my "free" time working with the *Atari Works Data Base (AWDB)* program. The *AWDB* does not have all the features, like a full programming language, that some of the more "sophisticated" data base products have. However, it does have many features not found in other data bases.

AWDB is a curious mixture of limitations in some areas combined with enormous flexibility in other areas. It will require a large, full report, to adequately explain *AWDB*. Perhaps there will be room next month. For now, I will just assume that you know all about data bases, but don't know much about *AWDB*.

To create a new data base in *AWDB*, you first fill in a series of dialog boxes asking for the names of your fields. When you are done, a default template is created for you to fill in your data for each record. However, you may rearrange this template however you want. To change the size of the field, just click on the field contents box and drag it to the size you want. To reposition a field, click on the field name and move the field anywhere on the page. To add a new field, draw a new box at some empty part of your page; you are prompted for the field name. To specify the kind of data (text, number, date, time, etc.), highlight a field name and then choose "Field Attributes..." As you are entering data, use the Tab key to go from field to field (or just click on any field you want to edit). Use the up and down arrows to go from record to record.

This form method for inputting data is very easy and versatile, but it is only part of the story. You can switch to a list view of your data base, where every record appears on a single line, with field names at the top, like a spreadsheet. If you have more fields than will fit on the screen, you can use the scroll bar at the bottom of the GEM window to scroll to the right to see more fields. You can add new records or change data in this format as well. What's more, if you don't like the order of the fields on the screen, you can simply grab any field and drag it to the left or right to change its position. You can increase (or decrease) the width of any column by dragging its right border to the right (or left). You can instantly sort the data on any field and rearrange your records at will. Data bases are very useful, but so are spreadsheets, and they are useful in different ways. However, *AWDB* has managed to combine some of the more useful aspects of spreadsheets right there in your data base file.

So, *AWDB* makes it easy to create a database, fill it, and review and edit records. It is inevitable that your first shot at creating fields will not be perfect. You will have forgotten to include some field or you may find it more useful entering the data in a different order. No problem at all with *AWDB*.

I used *AWDB* to create several data bases last month. One holds the contents of *CN* in 1993 with a record for every article, review, press release, letter to the editor, etc. Another database is focused on Atari vendors with information on the company or store, its address, phone number, e-mail, contact name, and products, as well as references to where you can find further information in *CN*, either in an advertisement, a press release, or a product review. With just the information obtained in just one year of *Current Notes*, I was able to compile a database of nearly 150 Atari vendors. I created a separate data base of Atari retailers combining information from *CN* with our own store distribution list. I also used the *AWDB* to get a better handle on the disks in the *CN* library by building a data base of library disks. All of these databases will be offered in the *CN* Library and most have already been uploaded to GENie and CompuServe.

To be sure, there are limitations in *AWDB*, improvements that would make it an even stronger product. But in its current state, it is versatile enough to allow me to, relatively easily, get some real work done and complete some useful projects that I never could have gotten to if I had to rely on being able to write programs for *DBMAN*. If you don't have *Atari Works*, plan on getting it!

Joe Waters

Table of Contents**Vol. 14, No. 2: March 1994****Regular Features:**

8-Bit Tidbits, Rick Reaser
"Starting Year Number Three"

Atari in the STicks, Henry van Eyken
"A Systems View of Language"

Atari Works, Michael 'Papa' Hebert
"Textmongering with Style and Grace"

Delphi Forum, Paul Lefebvre

GENie Notes, Lou Rocha
Around GENie, by Lou Rocha
RTC Highlights, by Brian Harvey
Hot Topics, by Terry Quinn
User Spotlight: Sandy Wolf
Developer Spotlight: Damien Jones

Running Out of Ram, David Barkin
"The NOVA Graphics Board"

ST Toolbox, J. Andrzej Wrotniak
"Naked Atari Developers
Terrorizing a Computer Show"

Status Atari, Paul Lefebvre
"Greetings, All!"

Woods Music, Gary Woods
"Music and Technology
N.A.M.M. - 1994"

Departments

Editorial, Joe Waters 2

News and Announcements 6

List of Advertisers 64

Classified Ads 64

The Cover: After a long winter, Spring is finally showing signs of emerging. Of course, for die-hard Atarians, some strange things may pop out of that frozen ground! Photo (c) 1993 by M. Heininger.

Special Features:

34 **Imagecopy 2**
Review by John Godbey 22

51 **Geneva**
Review by Jim Fouch 24

48 **Advanced 8-bit Graphics Systems**
By Thomas Andrews 38

47 **The Making of Maze of AGDAgon**
By Chuck Steinman 41

56 **Maze of AGDAgon**
Review by David Paterson 42

28 **Atari 8-Bits Take on "Wayne's World"**
By Margo Sullivan 44

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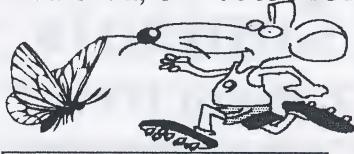
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Atari Industry News and Announcements

New Products

Load Aladdin Allows ST Aladdin to Work on Falcon030

Load Aladdin (LoadAlad) changes the serial/modem/RS232 routines in ST Aladdin from direct hardware access to TOS BIOS calls. *Aladdin* is not usable on the Falcon030 because of direct access to a serial port that no longer exists. With *LoadAlad*, not only can you use *Aladdin* on a Falcon030, but you can also take advantage of the extra serial ports on the MegaSTe and TT030. Plus, *Aladdin* no longer hooks into the serial receive vector, thus allowing the port to be used by other programs or accessories when not in use.

LoadAlad loads *Aladdin* into memory, searches for specific serial related routines, patches that code and then runs the enhanced memory-resident *Aladdin*. To receive your evaluation copy of *Load Aladdin*, send email to: GEnie: K.GERDES or Internet: k.gerdes@genie.geis.com.

The file archive will be sent to your email address either by GEmail for GEnie users or uuencoded on the internet. Registration costs \$15 and includes documentation, technical support and bug fix updates!

Load Aladdin support topic is on GEnie: ST Aladdin RT (ml000)- CAT2 TOP6. (Do NOT post file archive requests there. Send email, please.)

[Trace Technologies, PO Box 711403, Houston, TX 77271-1403. Phone: (713) 771-8332 weekdays 1PM-5PM CST]

* *ST Aladdin* is copyright The General Electric Company.

* *Load Aladdin* is released by permission of GEnie, Tim Purves and Griffin Hi Tech Software.

New Automation Program for GEnie and Delphi Users

Oracle for *STalker* 1.2 (Delphi version) and *Oracle* for *STalker* 1.3 (GEnie version) by Paul Lefebvre are *STalker* BackTALK scripts that automate access to Delphi and GEnie. This is the first such program for Delphi's Atari users. Both versions of *Oracle* work with the Falcon030, as well as with the Atari ST, STe, and TT computers, and can perform their tasks in the background. *Oracle* for Delphi allows users to cut their online costs because it automatically sends/receives mail, sends/receives forum messages, and downloads database files. Similarly, *Oracle* for GEnie users cuts online costs because it automatically sends/receives mail, sends/receives BB messages, and downloads library files. In either version, any mail or messages can be viewed offline and replies can be typed offline. To save users even more money, *Oracle* can be told to perform its tasks late at night, thus saving on long distance charges. *Oracle* is fully compatible with *Geneva* and *MultiTOS* to allow all of its operations to be performed in a multitasking environment.

Oracle is SHAREWARE and free support is available both on Delphi and GEnie. System Requirements for *Oracle* are an Atari ST/STe/TT/Falcon030 computer, and *STalker 3* (*Steno* is recommended).

If you have any questions, send Delphi email to PLE-FEBVRE or leave a message in the Atari Advantage forum. (Version 1.2 is also available in Delphi's Atari Advantage database in the telecommunications topic, under the name "ORACLE".)

GEnie users with questions can send email to P.LEFEBVRE or visit the Oracle topic (category 17, topic 22) in the BB in the Atari ST RoundTable. (Version 1.3 is also available in the GEnie Atari ST RoundTable Library.)

Registration includes the latest version of *Oracle*, the *STalker* 1.2 type ahead buffer for *STalker*, and free updates. Either version is available for \$15 (plus \$2 shipping) and can be ordered from Paul Lefebvre, 78 Winter Street, Portland, ME 04102.

Mastering Calligrapher 3.0

Mastering Calligrapher 3.0 is a Hypertext Personal Training Guide for both novice and advanced *Calligrapher 3.0* users alike. Novice users will find the simple step-by-step approach an easy way to lessen the learning curve, while advanced users will benefit from the referencing feature.

Each command is explained in detail with all the necessary information given on how to use it correctly. Tips and tricks are offered throughout the guide to give you ideas on how to exploit each command to its fullest.

The step-by-step tutorial is just like having a private tutor, but without the expensive cost of a tutor. The package includes example files on disk, user manual, the Hypertext Personal Training Guide and a PaperDirect catalog. A few of the topics covered: quick print, header, initial cap, virtual clipboard buffers, page numbering, text alignment, graphics and much more.

Features:

- * Over five printer drivers included.
- * Send online summary to printer for hardcopy reference.
- * Runs together with *Calligrapher*.
- * Resolution independent.
- * Supports the ST, TT and Falcon resolution modes, and third party graphic cards.
- * Comes on a double sided disk.
- * Requires only 145K of memory.

Mastering Calligrapher 3.0 is fast paced and to the point. It tells you everything you need to know to start creating documents, while mastering the program. Prepare to become a *Calligrapher* power user!

Suggested Retail Price: \$49.95. See your Atari dealer or order from us. Include \$2.00 for shipping and handling, and mail to: Spar Systems, 381 Autumn Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11208. Phone: (718)-235-3169.

Oregon Announces VideoMaster for Falcon

VideoMaster is a video and audio digitizer allowing users to sample full screen, color stills from a video camera, at up to 640x400, true color, or quarter screen, 30 frame per second, grey scale video clips, from any composite video source. *VideoMaster* also samples 16-bit stereo sound using the Falcon's internal sound hardware, then allows the user to compose multimedia sequences from the motion clips, the color stills, and the sound samples. These sequences can then be replayed, either within the program, or with a supplied, stand-alone player, so the user can distribute sequences via user group libraries, or Bulletin Board Systems.

ColorMaster is an accessory for use with *VideoMaster* Falcon. *ColorMaster* is an electronic RGB filter which, when used with *VideoMaster*, will allow the user to sample full color stills from a good, still frame video source, automatically.

Suggested retail price for *VideoMaster* Falcon is \$189.95. For more information contact Oregon Research, 16200 SW Pacific Hwy, Suite 162, Tigard, OR 97224. Phone: (503) 620-4919; Fax: (503) 624-2940.

Oregon Research Announces MIDI Breakthru

Breakthru is a professional quality, 64-track MIDI and sample sequencer for all Atari computers. In addition to playing MIDI instruments, *Breakthru* can, at the same time, play back 8- or 16-bit samples using the Atari's built in sample replay facility, or one of their external replay cartridges, respectively. In addition to all the expected standard sequencer features (MIDI file import and export, program change, MIDI filters, etc.); *Breakthru* offers the easy-to-use Diamond Drag note editing system, allowing users easy graphical manipulation of notes in the step editor screen. Other features include Standard Music Notation screen, a Tempo Map screen, allowing the user precise control of tempo throughout the song; Drum Editor Page, and the Juke Box screen, allowing users to arrange up to 32 songs for playback in order or randomly.

A *Plus* version of *Breakthru* is also available, offering 32 MIDI channels, instead of the standard 16.

Suggested retail price for *Breakthru* is \$299.95. For more information on this and other fine Atari products, contact Oregon Research (address and phone numbers given above.)

Gemini CD-ROM Special

Walnut Creek, one of the largest distributors of PC CD-ROMS, has announced *Gemini CD*, their first Atari disc. The CD disc contains public domain, shareware, and commercial demos of Atari ST applications, a large selection of electronic magazines, and many other files that will be of interest to the general Atari public.

In addition to the CD-ROM disk, the special includes a Photo CD desktop viewer application for the Falcon. Just click on any Photo CD image and have it pop on the screen in Falcon true-color! Runs from any standard Falcon resolution with anything but a monochrome monitor.

Also included is a *MultiTOS* ready XFS driver that will read both Photo CD and standard CD ROMS. Just plug your drive into the Falcon 030 and welcome to computing in the 90's. Drives supported include the Toshiba 3401, NEC-38, NEC-55, NEC-74 and NEC-84.

All the above are available for \$39.95, from It's All Relative Software. Send a check for \$39.95 to: Randall Kopchak, 2233 Keeven Lane, Florissant, MO 63031

PCD Sampler Volume I

PCD Sampler Volume I contains 20 professional images in Kodak Photo CD format. The images are ready for use with *Photo Show Pro*, *Studio Photo*, *Gem View*, *True Paint* and any other Atari application that supports the Kodak Photo CD imaging system.

Our *PCD Sampler-Volume I* retails for \$29.99. Send your check for \$29.99 to: Randall Kopchak, 2233 Keeven Lane, Florissant MO 63031.

The *PCD Sampler-Volume I* can also be used on the PC, Mac, and CD-I machines with appropriate software. Photography was done by Louis Back, Berlin.

ExtenDOS: CD Extensions for TOS

Would you like to join the CD-ROM revolution? *ExtenDOS* is your answer! It allows you to access any ISO9660 or High Sierra format CD-ROM as if it were a removable hard disk. You can switch between supported disk formats without a reboot and access files of any size; it even provides a built-in configurable cache facility to speed up data accesses.

ExtenDOS CD Extensions requires a SCSI CD-ROM drive connected to a SCSI port directly, or to an ACSI port via an ICD AdSCSI (or equivalent) host adapter. It has been validated on the ST, the MegaSTe, and the TT, with various models of CD-ROM drive. Falcon support will be available shortly; additional hardware support is currently under development. Please contact us at the address below if you require support for equipment not specified above.

ExtenDOS is available immediately at an introductory price of only \$19.95 (including shipping & handling) from: Anodyne Software, 6 Cobbler Court, Ottawa, Ontario K1V 0B8 CANADA.

Please make your payment by check or money order, in US\$ for shipping to the U.S.A., in Canadian\$ for shipping within Canada. Ontario residents please add 8% sales tax.

MajicSoft Announces Arcade Hits - Vol. I

MajicSoft has announced the release of their new games package, which consists of 10 of their best games, all created with M.A.G.E. Owners of the Atari 8-bit computers may be pleased to see clones of some of their favorite 8-bit arcade games now running on their STs!

The action-packed arcade games included on this disk are *Blastron* (a remake of the classic *Robotron*), *Dropix* (a remake of the classic *Tetris*), *Evader* (a horizontal arcade shoot'em up with multiple attack waves and special powerups), *Hopper* (special, improved version of the classic *Frogger*), *ST Invaders* (improved version of the classic *Space Invaders*), *Kid Kong* (a remake of the classic *Donkey Kong*), *Kid Krazy* (a new twist on the *Pac Man* type games offering a vertical player with gravity which allows you to move up and down the screen), *Super Dark Pearl* (Original game in which you control the Dark Pearl as it moves up the space grid), *Sleuth* (a remake of the classic *Shamus*), and *Thurg-N-Murg* (an original one or two player platform game with 50 levels of intense arcade action).

[*Arcade Hits - Volume 1* has a suggested retail price of \$49.95. MajicSoft, 348 Meredith Square, Columbia, SC 29223. Phone: (803) 788-8177.]

M.A.G.E. - MajicSoft Arcade Graphics Engine Technical Notes

M.A.G.E. has been designed to offer the novice or professional game designer a set of tools that provide powerful results with a minimum of programming headaches. While there are other products on the market that allow the ST enthusiast to program an arcade game, nothing ever released to the general public has made game design more interactive and, more importantly, easier to develop. Several popular games, like Dave Munsie's *Frogger* and *Kid Kong* took as little as a week to finish. Here are some of the reasons why:

- * Virtually unlimited sprites. You decide how many sprites you want your program to use. A typical *M.A.G.E.* game will have dozens of sprites moving about the screen with a frame rate of 17-20 frames per second.
- * Automatic sprite control: The powerful *M.A.G.E.* kernel provides totally automatic control of sprites. This means your sprites can follow predetermined patterns (Like in *KID KONG* and *FROGGER*), process complex offset patterns like those used in *ST INVADERS* or lightning fast directional movements as in *EVADER*.
- * What about the background of your game? With the included character handling routines you will be able to simulate a true character-based display with lightning fast results. *M.A.G.E.* easily detects when a sprite moves over a character (example: power pill). You can design several character maps and have them in memory and then have *M.A.G.E.* draw them for you automatically. Use the built in character map scrolling to create that awesome war game you have always wanted to do. You can create scrolling character displays that span several screens wide and tall. Again, with the included Map Editor this is a breeze.
- * Support routines: There are several support routines to help maximize the overall look and feel of your game. There are fast memory movers, screen blits and clears. You will also find multipurpose memory movers and special effect routines. For instance, auto-plotting star fields

with joystick control is no problem! There is also support for color cycling, background flashing, fade in/out. And for screen graphics, there is a fast decompression routine for DEGAS.PC1 pictures. For compression the engine uses the ICE data compression method.

* **Audio:** *M.A.G.E.* comes with built-in support for adding sound effects to your games. *M.A.G.E.* provides direct access to 100 built-in sound effects at any time from within your program. You can also play *ST REPLAY* samples using an interrupt driven routine so your program does not hang up while it is playing.

M.A.G.E. provides complete 100% compatibility for all versions of TOS, including the new Falcon TOS.

M.A.G.E. works in conjunction with *GFA BASIC 3.5*. The complete *M.A.G.E.* system has a suggested retail price of only \$129.95 and includes the *GFA BASIC* editor, compiler and assembler! You will not find an easier way to develop high quality games on the AtariST/STE/Falcon computers.

M.A.G.E. is available from fine Atari software dealers everywhere or you may contact MajicSoft directly at (803) 788-8177. Dealer inquiries welcomed.

If you would like to see some games created with *M.A.G.E.*, check out *Buttonz Awari* demo on CN #830, the *Dropix* demo on CN #831, and *Thurg'N'Murg* on CN #852.

Pandora/Medusa Announces T40

68040-Based Atari Clone

Specifications: Motorola 68040 running at 64 Mhz; Internal FPU and PMMU; Performance is around 26 MIPS, 4.5 MFLOPS

Main bus: 32 Bit Data, 32 Bit Address; Bus Clocked at 32 Mhz; Full Bus snooping read and write

Atari bus: 16-bit Data, 24-bit Address; Bus snooping, write; Own ACSI Address for full 32 Bit Address

Fast RAM: Holds 8 to 128 Megabytes on board; Write 73 Mbyte/second; Read 85 Mbyte/second

EPROM: Two MByte on board; 32-Bit Wide; TOS 3.06 modified slightly

ST I/O Board: DMA; MIDI; SERIAL; PRINTER; KEYBOARD; FLOPPY DD, HD, ED; 2 SERIAL PORTS (like TT Modem) (up to 115Kbaud); IDE Bus (12 Mb/second); ISA Bus (for own custom Graphics Board). This ISA Bus will work with any ET-4000 Based Graphics Board on PC Platform with the NVDI ET-4000, however, NVDI ET-4000 only supports up to max. 32,000 colors as of this date.)

Available Options:

VME Bus: VME Bus 16-bit; Laser Printer Port (?); ROM-Port; Mega Bus

SCSI Board: TT SCSI; SCSI II; TT Lan

DSP Board: DSP96002

A MC68060 Board is scheduled for release in 1994.

The price of the T40 is \$2,490 (price can vary depending on the exchange rate). The price includes a basic motherboard 68040/64, tower housing, and ST input/output board. The T40 is available NOW! Transport time should take no longer than two weeks.

Additionally, you may purchase an ET-4000 Graphics Board 15/16-bit color onboard for about another \$100 + NVDI ET-4000. A VME Bus Multiple Bus Board (see description above) for another \$400. You may configure the T40 with 8, 16, 32, 64 or 128 Megabytes on board; the price depending on SIMMS, which currently are selling for around \$40 per megabyte. Cost of an IDE internal drive depends on drive size. For an internal IDE drive no external casing is required. NOVA VME 16M Graphics Board, when purchased with VME Bus (for 24-bit Color), costs \$489. All prices given are Recommended Retail, shipping not included.

T40 compatibility with the TT is very high. I cannot make a list of ALL the working programs, but if you have an inquiry about a single product, then please email me, and we could look into it for you.

Yat Siu

[Lexicor Software Europe, Internet: lexicorworld@delphi.com. LEXICOR SOFTWARE CORPORATION, (510) 848-7621 or (510) 848-7613.]

The Oracle System: Multiline/MultiTask GEM BBS

SCHAUZMOLL Software is about to release a new BBS system like nothing you have ever seen on the Atari platform. *The Oracle System* will revolutionize the way you communicate by modem. Forget everything you ever knew about "BB-Sing" and enter the area of "GUI-Telecommunications." *The Oracle System* is like being on the GEM desktop, so you can use your mouse to go where you want to go, see what you want, and get it without your fingers touching the keyboard.

Here are some of *The Oracle System*'s main features:

- ✓ Can handle 3 phones lines using a MEGA STE
- ✓ User-friendly Graphic Interface with menus, windows and icons
- ✓ Unlimited number of menus, sub-menus, message bases & file section
- ✓ On board system and user editors
- ✓ Four section (windows) can be opened at any time on the BBS.
- ✓ Real message base text editor with GDOS fonts, load, save, copy, cut, and quote functions all using the mouse
- ✓ Attach a file to any message in any message bases
- ✓ Intelligent files section with archives file extracting
- ✓ Auto files validation option
- ✓ Possibility to upload and download files simultaneously
- ✓ Bilingual system capability (English and French)
- ✓ Automated files uploading and new files downloading
- ✓ Automated message posting and recovering
- ✓ Automated electronic mailing system
- ✓ Message bases networking (OR-NET, FIDO-NET, ATARI-NET)
- ✓ Advance BBS networking and RTC capability
- ✓ On-line user configurable and editable database system
- ✓ Advertisement feature (display advertisement like TV commercials)
- ✓ Download picture and display it directly in a window
- ✓ Files and messages clipboards

- ✓ On-line help in French & English for every function on the terminal
- ✓ Library Dynamic file distribution
- ✓ *MultiTOS* and Falcon compatible
- ✓ a ZIP file extractor that will extract downloaded files automatically after logoff

The Oracle System will be available for the Atari ST computer on February 1st 1994. The complete system is selling for \$199.95 and includes a complete 100-page SysOp manual, *The Oracle System* Terminal Users manual in a printed-to-disk format, the 7 days/week SysOp help-line so you can call to get help at any time, free system and terminal program upgrades for a year, and a mini weather station.

For more information call the OasiSTE BBS at 1-418-623-3729 and leave a message to the SysOp (it's me!) or write to: SCHAUZMOLL Software, c/o Christian Ernst, 5550 avenue Guy, Charlesbourg P.Q., Canada G1H 4L5.

The Recipe Box 4.0

Already the best selling recipe database in the shareware market, *The Recipe Box* has been completely rewritten for commercial release.

The most requested feature for *The Recipe Box* was a larger recipe capacity, and version 4 meets that need by allowing up to 2.5 million recipes! Many other new features have been added to version 4. *The Recipe Box* now runs in a movable window in any resolution (color or mono), provides full access to your desk accessories, and the new 3D user interface is fully user configurable. The recipe editor has been greatly improved for easier recipe entry, and support has been added for nutritional data. The resizing feature has been enhanced to allow saving resized recipes, in addition to viewing them. The search feature has been improved to allow text searching as well as title searches. The new print routines allow easy printing using text or GDOS, and a new batch menu makes it easy to print or export complete chapters or any recipes you choose.

Most operations take place at the main menu, which is easier to read and more flexible than in previous shareware versions. Previously difficult operations, such as moving recipes to new chapters, have been replaced by simple "Drag-and-Drop" operations.

The Recipe Box V4 directly imports *Meal-Master*, *Computer Chef*, *The Recipe Box* (v3.5), or any text file, without the need of an external conversion program. In addition, v4 exports directly in *Meal-Master 7.0* format. These new import/export functions should make recipe exchange with other computer platforms much easier.

In addition to recipe storage, v4 includes a built in grocery planner, meal planner and user-editable calorie chart. A text reader is also built in for easy reading of external information files.

The Recipe Box works on all ST, STE, TT and Falcon computers, though 1 megabyte of RAM and a hard drive is recommended. *Speedo-GDOS* is also recommended, though the program is compatible with all *GDOS* versions. *The*

Recipe Box is fully compatible with, and will multitask with, *Geneva* (Gribnif), or *MultiTOS* (Atari).

For more information or to place an order, contact: Mountain Software, 6911 NE Livingston Road, Camas, Washington 98607 USA. Suggested retail price is \$54.95. Dealer inquiries are invited! Owners of version 3.5 or earlier may upgrade to version 4 for only \$20 + shipping. Shipping is \$3.00 in the US, or \$6.00 on foreign orders. Residents of Washington State please add 7.6% sales tax.

TOWERS: The 3D Dungeon Game

This is JV Enterprises first attempt at TRYWARE marketing for the Atari platform. What you have is the full version of *Towers*, with all the features intact. You can play several levels of the game without the manual. In order to progress further and complete the game, you will require the manual. The manual can be ordered through us for \$15 U.S. funds.

As a bonus, all registered participants will be eligible to win a Jaguar Game System, by finding and decoding an Easter Egg in the game and sending that information to us before May 31, 1994. All registered users with the correct answer will then be thrown into a pot, and the winner of the Jaguar Game System will be selected at random. (Full rules and details are included with the manual.)

To register your game and obtain your manual, send a check or money order for \$15 in U.S. funds to: JV Enterprises, PO Box 97455, Las Vegas, NV 89193-7455. You may, alternatively, pay with your VISA or MasterCard by calling 1-800-252-0194. Call 702-734-9689 if you are calling outside of the U.S. or Canada.

Towers requires a minimum of 928,200 bytes of FREE memory left on your system. *Towers* will not run on a one megabyte system with any accessories or hard drive utilities or programs running. It can be installed on a Hard Drive (with more than one megabyte). And, if you are running off of floppies, *Towers* can utilize a second disk drive.

Towers is compatible with the ST/STE/TT/Mega/Falcon systems. The program fits on two DS/DD disks. Please keep all files on the respective disk. The program will not work on a floppy system if files are mixed! *Towers* is available on the national online services and in the *Current Notes* Library (#874 and #875).

Price Drop on 105 MB Removable Cartridge Drives

You can now store your Atari software on removable cartridges for only 65 cents/megabyte! Toad Computers is pleased to announce the arrival of the SyQuest 105MB removable cartridge drive at new, totally affordable prices. When this drive was first introduced last summer, it was outrageously expensive. Now, SyQuest is starting to replace their popular 44 and 88MB drives with this new 105MB drive, and they've priced it to SELL!

The new 105MB drive uses 3.5" cartridges that sell for the same price as their 44MB counterparts, so the price per

megabyte goes down dramatically--down from \$1.56 per megabyte to just 65 cents per megabyte!

This 105MB removable is cheaper and faster to operate than Floptical drives. Compare a sustained transfer rate of over 700K per second and a 14ms access time to a Floptical, which is as slow as a floppy drive and costs \$1.14 per megabyte! It even works for direct to disk recording (D2D, Musicom) on a Falcon!

Toad Computers has also compiled a 105MB cartridge full of Falcon demos, which can be copied onto your included cartridge when you order a drive. The cartridge also includes graphics, sounds, and more. If you already have a 105MB SyQuest drive, you can order this demo cartridge for just \$69 (one per customer).

The new price on the SyQuest 105MB removable drive is \$459. It comes complete in a small case with power supply and SCSI ID switch. Cartridges cost just \$69. They are available now. Contact Toad Computers for details.

[Toad Computers, 570-F Ritchie Highway, Severna Park, MD 21146-2925. Phones: (410) 544-6943 Questions / Information; (800) 448-8623 Orders; (410) 544-1329 FAX; (410) 544-6999 BBS; (800) 967-7449 Dealer Inquiries.]

Product Upgrades

CodeHead Announces New Update Policy for Warp 9

You asked and we listened!

Many of our customers have asked for an easier way to obtain their *Warp 9* upgrades. Until now, we've required the return of your original disk in order to receive most upgrades.

Effective immediately, Codehead Technologies will accept upgrade orders from registered owners of *Warp 9* without the return of your original disks.

Upgrade orders may be placed in e-mail on GEnie, CompuServe, Delphi, our own BBS, by phone, FAX, or mail. All that is required is that we have proof of your ownership of *Warp 9* by one of the following means:

1. Inclusion in our database from your registration card.
2. Direct purchase with an invoice from CodeHead.
3. Return of original disk.
4. Receipt from a dealer showing *Warp 9* purchase.

If you have any questions, give us a call. We value our customers' satisfaction and listen to your suggestions. The *Warp 9* V3.80 upgrade is \$25 plus \$3 shipping (\$4 Canada, \$6 overseas). It comes on two disks, includes dozens of interesting and entertaining screensaver modules, and now has Falcon and *SpeedoGDOS* compatibility. For more information about the features of *Warp 9* V3.80, read the press release that was printed in the November 1993 issue of *Current Notes*.

For more information, contact CodeHead Technologies, P.O. Box 74090, Los Angeles, CA 90004. Phones: Voice (213) 386-5735 (M-F 9am-1pm); Fax (213) 386-5789; BBS (213) 461-2095. GEnie: J.EIDSVOOG1; CompuServe: 76004,2232; Delphi: EIDSVOOG.

Gemulator 3.02 Upgrade Notice

Branch Always is now shipping Gemulator 3.02, a maintenance release of Gemulator 3.0. It also includes a text file describing easy fixes to many frequently reported problems. Version 3.02 has these enhancements:

Memory - requires almost one megabyte less memory than v3.0, making that much more memory available to your PC or as ST RAM.

Stability - uses v1.9 of the DOS4/GW DOS Extender, which is more stable and eliminates random crashes on some problem PCs.

Floppy Disk Install - Gemulator now uses only 650K of disk space, so it can run from floppy disk, allowing you to run it on PCs without a hard disk or where the hard disk was too full to use before.

19200 Baud Modem Support - all modem baud rates from 110 baud on up to 19200 baud are now supported.

Inverse Monochrome Support - white text on a black background in monochrome mode is now supported.

Boot from Real Partitions - the HDX hard disk driver can now be installed to autoreboot from real hard disk partitions (except c:). Say goodbye to virtual partitions by being able to autoreboot and access your Atari files from MS-DOS. May require reformatting your hard disk first.

Drive Letter Remapping - swap around hard disk drive letters. For example, you can make the MS-DOS D: drive behave as the Atari C: drive. Also allows you to access MS-DOS drives beyond F:.

Branch Always is offering this upgrade to current registered users of *Gemulator 3.0* for a minimal cost of only \$12.00, to cover our costs for materials. The upgrade price for all other Gemulator users is \$60.00. This upgrade ends February 28, 1994. Call our 206-369-5513 support number with questions.

Make checks payable to Branch Always Software, 14150 N.E. 20th Street, SUite 302, Bellevue, WA 98007.

Papa's Grafik Guide to AtariWorks Word Processor Update

Papa's Grafik Guide to AtariWorks Word Processor keeps getting better. In response to reader feedback there have been several revisions made. All those who have purchased the book will get the revised pages automatically.

Those of you who have purchased your copy from a dealer are not on my mailing list, I would like to see that you get the revisions, also. Please send me your name, mailing address and the name of your dealer via US Mail to: Papa's Grafik Press, 1228 N. School St., Honolulu, HI 96817. If you prefer, you can e-mail me at M.HEBERT1 on GEnie. There will be NO CHARGE for this update.

The revision will be supplied in the form of replacement pages already punched to fit the comb binding. Although you can attempt to unbind, insert and rebind yourself, I suggest that you take the new pages and the book to a quick printer and have them do it for you. It's much easier with the proper equipment. They will probably charge you a couple of dollars.

Flash II v2.2 Now Shipping

Missionware Software is pleased to announce the release of v2.2 of *Flash II*. Version 2.2 fixes a number of problems discovered by our customers and beta testers over the past few months. We have added a number of enhancements as well, and now the program is fully Falcon030 compatible! It's our second full upgrade. If you already own a version of *Flash II*, just download the file F22UPG.LZH and use it to patch your current version.

Flash II is the update to the most popular Atari ST telecommunications program ever! It's available exclusively from Missionware Software and at an affordable price! *Flash II* is completely rewritten by Paul Nicholls of Clayfield, Australia. But don't let that fool you! *Flash II* has the same look and feel as previous versions of *Flash* ... plus a slew of new features to boot! And it's just as easy and fast to use for the telecommunications beginner or pro!

The new features of Version 2.2 include:

- * Full Falcon030 compatibility.
- * Enhanced DEC VT Terminal emulations including the ability to swap the functions of the Delete and Backspace keys for conformance to standard DEC terminals.
- * Enhanced ANSI terminal and graphics.
- * History buffer is now included for Type Ahead editor.
- * Full support for all Atari serial ports on TT030 and MegaSTc.
- * Terminal mode now displays either the real time clock or a timer. When the timer is displayed, it now runs all the time.
- * Search-Next mode added in editor. Control-F9 keystrokes can be used for this new function.
- * Enhanced DO scripting language.

Missionware Software's upgrade policy remains the same for the new Version 2.2! We will continue to upgrade any old version of *Flash!* (copyright Antic Software) for just \$30 US, plus \$4 shipping and handling (U.S. and Canada), \$8 worldwide. Or, you can purchase *Flash II*, version 2.1 outright, for only \$49.95 US plus the shipping and handling charges applicable to your area. To order, or for more information, contact: Missionware Software, 354 N. Winston Drive, Palatine, IL 60067-4132. Phone: (708)-359-9565.

DataBasement Software's ShareWare Registration Deal

In an effort to boost registrations on DataBasement Software's Shareware products, DataBasement Software is offering a limited time "Registration Deal." From now till April 15th you may register all of DataBasement Software's shareware titles for the low price of \$30 plus \$5 for shipping and handling.

The SHAREWARE "Registration Deal" Package includes:

BLITZGEM.ZIP. GEM version of *Die Blitzschnell Hard Drive Defragmenter/Optimizer*. Offers comprehensive visual mapping (two modes) as well as allowing the user to manually manipulate data at the cluster level. This Defragmenter/Optimizer surpasses even some commercial products in speed and versatility. This program received a rating of 4

Lamps in GEnieLamp vol. #3, Issue #64. Normal registration fee: \$23.

BLITZCLI.ZIP. TTP version of *Die Blitzschnell Hard Drive Defragmenter/Optimizer*. Offers the same speed performance as the GEM version but accepts commands via the command line. This is just perfect for those "power" users who may desire to automate the defragmentation process-perhaps as part of a BBS's nightly/weekly backup/cleanup process. Does not use AES, and all output may be redirected or "squelched" entirely. Normal registration fee: \$23.

KITTYLCK.ZIP. This handy desk accessory/program is designed to prevent kids/pets/others from tampering with your system while you have stepped away. When invoked it will display a form requesting a password. While invoked the system is effectively locked, preventing access to the menu bar, or keypresses from reaching say an opened document, for instance. The latest version allows the user to customize the password and engage The "Kitty" Lock a set number of milliseconds after the accessory is loaded. These additions make it an excellent security system for the average user. Normal registration fee: \$5.

VOL_UTIL.ZIP. This handy desk accessory/program allows you to label disk volumes sequentially with just the click of a mouse. Ranges from 1 digit (0-9) to 6 digits (0-999999) with the number field embedded in either the file-name or file extension. Normal registration fee: \$5.

50FAKIND.ZIP. This is a low res only Yahtzee clone for one or two players. Simple mouse driven custom GUI affords colorful and easy game play. Written and compiled in GFA BASIC. Normal registration fee: \$15.

EUCHRE.ZIP. This is a low res only, single player Euchre card game. You and a computer partner are pitted against two computer opponents in this classic card game. Features "Intelligent" play with the occasional risky play thrown in for realism. Features corny graphics and a simply mouse driven GUI. Normal registration fee: \$15.

Each of the listed archives include all necessary files and documentation. To register please send a check or money order for \$35 payable to Erin Monaco: Erin Monaco, 35244 Chestnut, Wayne, MI 48184.

If you are a GEnie Subscriber I will also accept a Gift Of Time for the amount of \$35. To send a Gift Of Time type GIFTOTIME or M80 at the GEnie prompt. This enables you to use your credit card and speeds up the process as I will upload the package as an attached E-mail file.

[NOTE: Special to CN Readers: Erin's Registration Deal disk is available from Current Notes for only \$30; just order DataBasement's Shareware Special from CN Library, 122 N Johnson Rd, Sterling VA 20164 (703) 450-4761.]

Tracker/ST and Tracker/ST for Windows Bundle

Step Ahead Software, Inc. is pleased to announce that for the next three months, until April 30, we will be including a free copy of the Windows version of *Tracker/ST* with every copy of *Tracker/ST* for the Atari. With the Atari version retail-

ing for \$99.95, and the Windows version retailing for \$119.95, this is an incredible "greater than 2-for-1" savings!

Tracker/ST has long been regarded as the leading mailing list program for the Atari ST. The latest version (v3.04) is fully compatible with all Atari computers, from the original 1040ST right through the Falcon. For those of you who want even more compatibility, we offer *Tracker/ST* for Windows, which runs on any IBM or compatible using Microsoft Windows. And for the next three months (through March 31, 1994) we'll be including this Windows version FOR FREE along with every copy of *Tracker/ST* for the Atari. Now you can run the same program on an IBM that you have at work, or on a second computer at home. It's also easy to transfer names between the Atari and Windows versions of *Tracker/ST*; there's no need to re-type your names and addresses. If you don't have any need for the Windows version, give it to a friend as a gift!

Tracker/ST is very easy to use, and its features include up to 9-across mailing labels, full support for all laser printers, the DeskJet and the BubbleJet, the ability to store an unlimited number of names, the world's easiest mail merge system, unlimited notes for every entry in your files, and much, much more. So purchase *Tracker/ST* today, and get two great mailing list programs for the price of one!

Minimum requirements for *Tracker/ST* on the Atari are one megabyte of RAM, one double-sided drive (for installation only), and a hard drive with at least 1.5 megabytes of storage available. Minimum requirements for the Windows version of *Tracker/ST* are Windows 3.1, two megabytes of RAM, a 3.5" high-density drive (for installation only), and a hard drive with at least three megabytes of storage available.

Tracker/ST is available at Atari dealers everywhere, or you may order directly from Step Ahead Software, 332 Bleeker St, Suite 39, New York, NY 10014. Phone: 718-858-4164.

Industry Update

IAJD Support Group Formed

The *Independent Association of Jaguar Developers* (IAJD) has been formed as a support group to promote game development, to develop standards, and as a general information sharing network for registered Jaguar developers. The IAJD is located on GEnie in Category 64 of the Atari ST RoundTable (m475;1). Registered developers can apply for IAJD membership by sending GEnie EMAIL to ENTRY\$.

Kansas City Atari Connection Now Meets on Saturdays

The *Kansas City Atari Connection* is now meeting on the second Saturday of the month, at the Blue Ridge Mall in Kansas City, Missouri. The Blue-Ridge Mall is on the East side of Kansas City, just off I-70, between the eastern loops of I-435 and I-470. (And just east of the Truman Sports Complex.) To get to the mall, get on I-70. If on the Eastbound lanes, exit at Stirling Avenue, Exit Number 10. Turn right at

the traffic light. Go to the next corner and turn left onto 43rd Street. The mall's South Parking Lot is on the left. The meeting is held on the lower level of the Mall, off the Community Lane entrance, roughly in the center of the Mall. Coming in from the entrance, there is a hallway on the left which contains a staircase and an elevator. Go downstairs from this hallway. The meeting room is near the stairs, between the Christian Science Reading room and the Post Office.

The Lynx Reemerges as a Wild Cat

Game fans will be happy to learn that Phil Patton's "fanzine" *The Lynx* has returned and is now called *Wild Cat*. It specializes in the gaming side of Atari computers and systems, especially Atari's cats and birds, the Lynx, Jag, and Falcon030. For Atarians who want the latest tips, tricks, honest reviews, and the hottest news, *Wild Cat* is published 8 times a year, in full-color, and consists of 12 packed pages. The subscription price is only \$12 a year. A sample copy of the *Wild Cat* can be obtained for \$1.50 (U.S. only). Contact Phil Patton, 131 Dake Ave, Santa Cruz, CA 95062.

March 19 - "Computer Communities" in Philadelphia, PA

Once more, P.A.C.S. (Philadelphia Area Computer Society, a multi-platform users group) is having its annual Computer Festival. The year marks the 17th annual festival and the theme of this year's show is "Computing Communities."

All types of computers are supported. The Atari Sig's, including an 8-Bit, ST, Falcon, and Kid Sig, are looking forw

ward to being joined by other Atari users groups at the show. JACS, SAAUG, NOVATARI, and an 8-Bit group from Delaware have been invited, so Atari will be represented by five Users Groups at the show as well as some Atari vendors.

The show will be held on March 19th at Drexel University's Main Building at 32nd and Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, PA. For more information contact Alice P. Christie, Atari Sig's President, (610) 521-2569.

June 4/5 - Texas Atari Festival '94

The Texas Atari Festival '94 will be held in San Antonio on June 4th and 5th on the beautiful campus of St. Mary's University. Last year this show was called the *Fiesta Atari Computer Show*. As well as a change of name, The ST Atari League of San Antonio have expanded their show from a one day affair to two days and invites Atari vendors to sign up to show their wares and all Atarians to come on down, meet a bunch of really fantastic, fun people, and generally just have a great time!

Show organizers plan to anchor the show with three main areas of interest: MIDI, Desktop Publishing, and gaming, both hand held and console. The idea is a simple one. Use broad areas of interest to encourage people to attend the show and, when they get here, show them all the other neat stuff that is available to them!

Atari vendors are urged to contact Scott Helsel, Event Coordinator, Texas Atari Festival '94, 13938 Brantley, San Antonio, Texas 78233. Phone: 210-655-4672.



Don't Be A Solitary Atari.

The largest and longest standing group of Atari® users in the world shares its problems and solutions online every day in CompuServe's Atari Forums. And you can join them.

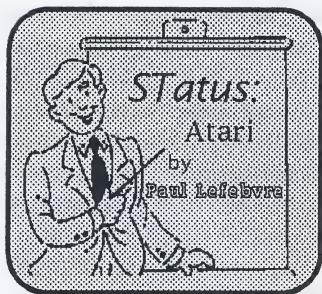
Find the latest software, like the new desktop publishing program for the ST. Learn how to run Macintosh® and MS-DOS® programs on your Atari. And pick up helpful game tips from experienced players.

Need technical help? Atari personnel and most third-party software and hardware vendors are online

every day. You can even provide recommendations as they develop new programs and products. There's no better way to get more out of your Atari.

To join CompuServe, see your computer dealer. To order direct or for more information, call 800 848-8199. In Ohio and Canada, call 614 457-0802. If you're already a member, type GO ATARI at any ! prompt.

CompuServe®



Greetings, All!

As you may now be aware, I am the new *Current Notes* ST editor. I am honored to be writing alongside of some of the Atari community's most respected authors. I have been an Atari user since 1983 when I started with a 16K Atari 400. In 1989, I moved up to a 1040ST and have since upgraded to a MegaSTe system. I am primarily a programmer (perhaps you've seen some of my efforts: *JumpSTART* and *Oracle* are most common), but do use my Atari for other tasks. But, this magazine is not about me, so let me tell you what I would like to accomplish as ST editor:

- ★ As the title of this column suggests, I want to cover everything new in the Atari scene. However, though Jaguar will make or break Atari, I don't think the readers of this magazine want it focusing on Jaguar.
- ★ You will start to see more reviews of public domain and shareware software, even if I have to write them myself. I would like to see our loyal readers send me reviews of programs they use and like (or don't like). Don't be shy about putting your thoughts on paper. The Atari community needs your support!
- ★ Since the Falcon030 is the only Atari computer that is currently being produced, I would like to give it my full support. Therefore, articles that include the Falcon will be given priority over those that do not.
- ★ Being a programmer, I would like to see more articles in *CN* that deal with programming our favorite computer. Articles that describe how to use the new AES functions in *Geneva* and *MultiTOS* would be ideal. I am also working on some tutorials for using *Heat and Serve C* with the GEMFAST AES libraries.
- ★ Even though I am a programmer, I don't want to slight the less experienced ST user. I plan on having "Beginner's Guide to ..." articles to help those just starting out.
- ★ Lastly, I would like everyone to remember that this magazine is created by, and for, Atari users. If anyone has any suggestions or ideas for future articles, let me know. Prospective authors should also send me their writings. Now, on with this month's news!

Geneva

Hopefully, all of you have read Andrzej's mini-review of *Geneva* in the Dec/Jan issue. I just wanted to add my comments on *Geneva*. First of all, if you use your Atari regularly for anything but games, you owe it to yourself to get *Geneva*. It IS the best piece of software yet to appear on the Atari. Un-

fortunately, as Andrzej says, it is sad that these great products seem to appear near the end of a computer's life cycle. I have been using *Geneva* since July and the only time I turn on my computer without booting with *Geneva* is to play *Civilization* (Another program that I highly recommend).

Delphi Notes

Bob Brodie held a conference on Delphi this January where he was asked if Jaguar proceeds would help fund Atari's computer division. As expected, Atari's official statement on that question is, "Yes, that is the plan."

Remember *Freeze Dried Terminal*? This popular SHAREWARE program was deemed abandoned by all those who used it. Now, word is that the AtariUnited!Software-House (whew!) will be handling distribution and marketing of the new version 2.30. This version will be distributed in a nice jewel (CD) type case and should have better user support. Also, Gordie Meyer (co-founder of AtariUnited!, along with Pattie Barbiero) has told me that they are looking for other SHAREWARE authors who would like help distributing software. Contact either BIBLINSKI@delphi.com or ABARIERO@delphi.com for more information.

Steve Cohen of Wizztronics has produced a rack mount case for Falcon/STe/ST computers. He is also rumored to be working on a PowerPC-based computer that will use TOS/DOS and Macintosh operating systems! Give Steve a call at 516-473-2507 for more information.

Atari Corporation News

Atari's stock has finally settled at a more realistic \$6-\$8 per share. This is more in line for a company with such few products shipping (Falcon030, Jaguar, and TT). Yes, according to Atari, TT's are back in production. When U.S. dealers will see them is still a mystery. Atari needs to have a high-end computer available; for now the TT is it. It's official: Atari has no plans to resurrect *Atari Explorer* magazine. If you haven't received all the issues in your subscription, call customer service at (408) 745-2000 to request a refund. The designer of *AtariWorks* has said that he has found a cure for the "black page" bug that randomly causes your printer to spit out a completely black page (see last issue's *AtariWorks* review for more details about this problem). Be on the lookout for an update.

Jaguar

Atari Corp.'s latest project, which, unfortunately, seems to be monopolizing all their time, has been getting a fair amount of press lately. *Computer Retail Week*, which is available free to retail professionals, seems to be mentioning Jaguar more frequently. In an article on Sega CD, the closing paragraph states that Atari shipped more than 20,000 machines despite having only four games available for it. They say that Atari expects to be in 10 markets in the first quarter, 10 more in the second quarter and be nationwide by the end of the year. They go on to say that Atari has been getting reorders from such retail outlets as Babbage's, The Good

Guys!, Circuit City, Electronics Boutique, Toys'R'Us, F.A.O Schwarz, and J & R Computer World.

Also in the same issue, the Dr. Digital column comments that Atari is generally quick to market with hardware (??), but does not always follow up with third-party software support (how true).

In the January 31 issue of *Business Week*, there is an article called "Video Games: The Next Generation." Jaguar garnered a short paragraph where it was called a "technical winner." Unfortunately, there was also mention of fear that Jaguar may be "caged to due Atari's tattered marketing history."

Other notes from this article:

- 3DO sold poorly at Christmas
- Amiga CD32 (\$399) shown at CES
- Phillips CD-I (\$399-\$499) will focus more on games and less on educational software
- Nintendo's "Project Reality" with Silicon Graphics is not expected until 1995
- Sega Saturn CD-based system is not expected until 1995.

By the way, interested in becoming a Jaguar developer? Get your credit cards out: a complete Jaguar development system sells for \$9000!

Radio Shack

What do Radio Shack and Atari have in common? Nothing? Well, when Atari was having problems with the switchbox to connect Jaguar to a TV, they went to Radio Shack to purchase higher quality switchboxes. And now, Radio Shack has started carrying Atari 2600 and 7800 video game cartridges. These cartridges are available through their Express Order program for \$9.99 each and generally take about 10 days to arrive at your door. They have a list of 28 Atari 2600 games and 30 Atari 7800 games.

Civilization

Have you purchased this game, yet? If you like strategy games, this is a must-have. However, as much as I like the game, there are bugs in it. Most annoying is when it crashes just before saving your score. But, don't despair; send your master disks off to England (the address is in the ST supplement). After about 4-6 weeks you will get the latest version in the mail. Don't send your disks to the MicroProse U.S. office, as they don't know anything about the Atari version.

Gribnif News

Be on the lookout for *NeoDesk 4*! The latest version of Gribnif's incredibly useful, popular and powerful desktop has many new features (the following is just a partial list):

- ✓ Multicolored icons
- ✓ Dialog boxes are displayed in windows
- ✓ Dynamic memory usage to allow for more icons on the desktop at one time
- ✓ New directory filter that was created after 1/15/94 allows you to show files with a size greater than 50,000 bytes.
- ✓ File operations can occur in the background

- ✓ Program groups, similar to what *Microsoft Windows* has
- ✓ Windows now contain their own menu bar
- ✓ Keyboard selection of icons.

NeoDesk 4 will retail for \$69.95. Upgrades from *NeoDesk 3* are just \$25! Including an all-new manual! Expected availability is early March. Contact Gribnif Software at (413) 247-5620 from 10am-6pm EST. Also, Gribnif is having a special close-out of *NeoDesk 3* at \$34.95!

Also on the Gribnif front, a new programmer has just signed on to further the development of *Stalker* and *Steno*. Jeff Krzysztof (GENIE: J.KRZYSZTOW) will now be handling all the programming for these fine applications, taking over from creator Eric Rosenquist.

End of the Month

That's all for this month. Send all correspondence to:

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Woods
Music
by
Gary Woods

Atari. This was originally supposed to be a column all about Atari at the annual National Association of Music Merchants convention in Anaheim. Unfortunately, the Atari presence at NAMM was limited to a suite at the Hilton across the street from the convention. Traditionally, they have had a large booth with many of their 3rd party providers demonstrating software. In the suite, I met the people from Wizztronics who are marketing a rack case for the Falcon, which retails for \$275. Also, they had an expander board for the Falcon, which replaces the 68030 chip with a 68040 chip running at 16mHz. Also, they were showing a RAM Expansion Board that would allow the use of TT RAM. The 040 board is \$650, and the RAM expansion board is \$300 without the RAM. For further information contact: Wizztronics, P.O. Box 122, Port Jefferson Station, New York, NY 11776.

Back on the convention floor, other Atari products were being shown, such as *Cubase Audio* for the Falcon, E-Magic's *Notator Logic*, and Dr. T's *Omega II* sequencing package, but it wasn't the same without the big Atari presence. I talked briefly to James Grunke, who is in charge of the Music Division for Atari, and he said that they are expecting large profits to come from their new Jaguar game system, and some of that money would be funneled back into the Music Division. Hopefully, next year they'll be back bigger and better than ever.

IBM. Another big surprise was to find IBM on the floor of the convention with a good size booth. They were showing some CD-ROM systems, but generally seemed like fish out of water. I think it would have been more advantageous for them to have some of their 3rd party providers in the booth with them. People such as Passport Designs, 12 Tone Systems, and Cubase could have provided a jumping off point for people to get to know the new people representing Big Blue. I've felt for a long time that the PC is the computer of the future for the music world, and almost every software provider had a Windows version of their software running.

I asked the IBM people for a price quote on a 486DX2 system running at 66mHz with a CD-ROM and they quoted me \$4,695 for a color system, \$3,895 for dual scan color and \$3,199 for a monochrome rig. (Has anybody seen the computer ads in their local pa-

Music and Technology

N.A.M.M. – 1994

per lately?) I think there are better deals to be had, but the PC platform is definitely worth looking into.

All right, on to the rest of how I spent 30 hours of the 1994 National Association of Music Merchants show from Anaheim.

Yamaha. The most interesting new product I saw was the *VL-1* by Yamaha. According to Yamaha it is an entirely new way of looking at Synthesis. Instead of starting with a sample, the sound is created by what they call "modeling" it after acoustic instruments. Such things as pitch, tonguing, and vibrato, are controlled by combinations of keyboard attack and pressure, and the way the breath controller is manipulated. The *VL-1* is a 2-voice instrument and retails for \$5,000. (Hmmm, \$2,500 a voice?) It sounded great and definitely drew a crowd. This is only the first in a series with the next unit being the *VP-1*, which will feature primarily keyboard sounds.

Elsewhere in the Yamaha booth they were showing the latest *DMP9-16/8*. It has 2 Band Parametric EQ, and 4 AUX Sends. The snapshot automation has 50 storage points and it retails for \$4,400 for 16 inputs, and \$3,200 for 8.

Korg. Across the hall from Yamaha the folks from Korg were holding court. Their focus seemed to be on their "i-series," of synthesizers. The interesting part of this product was not the sounds because they were being generated by their X3 technology that I've heard before, but the sequencer. In the sequencer section they have added what they call "Interactive Accompaniment Functions." There are ROM styles with four variations off of each style, and then there are User Styles that can be created. Each style has an Intro, Ending, Fill, and Variation, and can generate Drum, Perc, Bass, and Accompaniments 1-3. Seemingly with very little input from the individual demonstrating it, the machine kicked out some interesting music in Reggae, "Tower of Power," and Funk Styles. The 76-key configuration is \$3,899 and the 61 key configuration is \$3,199.

Roland. In the massive Roland booth they were showing their new sampler, the *S-760* with a neat feature of being able to access CD-ROMS (\$2,595). To compliment that, they introduced the *L-CDC Sampler CD-ROM Series*. Not only samples, but actual performances employing the sample were on each disc (\$195

each). In the Sound Canvas line they now have an *SC-88 Super Sound Canvas*. It has 570 instruments on board as well as 20 drum kits (\$1,095). For Roland's popular JV-80 synth, they were showing a new expander board called "Vintage Synth." This features Moog, Oberheim, ARP, Mellotron, etc. samples (\$445).

Oberheim. On the subject of vintage synths, it took some looking, but I finally found Oberheim. They were not where they were listed in the guide, and I didn't know they had become part of the Gibson Guitar company. They were showing their *OBMx Programmable Analog Synthesizer*. It comes in what looks to be a six-rack high unit with lots of switches and dials, and delivers not only that classic Oberheim sound, but also the vintage Moog sounds as well. The basic unit is two voices and retails for \$2,149, but additional two-voice cards can be purchased for \$769 apiece. (Now aren't you sorry you unloaded that OBXa for \$200?)

E-MU. The people at E-MU had several new products to peruse. The *Proteus FX* combines sounds from the Proteus 1 and Proteus 2, adds built-in digital effects, including a variety of reverbs, chorus and delays and gives you 512 presets all for a list of \$899. Next, they had the *UltraProteus*, which also featured Proteus 1 and Proteus 2 sounds as well as Proteus 3 sounds and those from the Proformance and waveforms from the Morpheus. The biggest difference with the UltraProteus was the addition of a Data Card slot on the front to allow you to save and load edits. At \$1,799 for the UltraProteus, I thought the Proteus FX was the better deal and sounded just as good, and, in some cases, even better, with all those onboard effects. The 3rd product shown off by E-MU was the *Morpheus*, which uses their Z-Plane Synthesis. The weakest part of the Proteus family for me has always been the synthesized sounds as opposed to the samples, which they do very well, and while the sounds in this unit are better than those in the Proteus families, they aren't anywhere near as interesting as you would find in a Korg Wave Station SR, for example. I don't think the Morpheus is a great product, retailing for \$1,599, but beauty is in the ear of the beholder.

Kurzweil. At Kurzweil they were showing a small unit called the *Micro Piano*. It has 32 presets that include the famous Kurzweil Grand Piano along with a Hammond Organ, Dual Cross Faded Rhodes, and FM electric pianos. For \$499 this is a great-sounding, reasonably-priced piece of gear. Also, Kurzweil was showing their *PC88 Performance Controller*. Besides being a controller with four discrete zones, four programmable sliders, four continuous control pedal inputs, two footswitches, three momentary switches, and a MIDI Arpeggiator, it also has a great sounding Digital Piano sound, along with 48 other factory presets. The PC-88 is a 16-part multi-timbral instrument and can

transmit on four channels simultaneously. It retails for \$2,295.

Fatar. On the subject of Keyboard Controllers, the Fatar company was showing their *Studio 900* model. This is a full 88-key, weighted-action keyboard. The feel is great and it weighs in at 55 pounds. The studio model retails for \$1,299, and for \$100 more you can have a built-in road case. According to the salesman, Fatar makes 70% of the keyboards for all the other manufacturers such as Kurzweil. The keyboard that really caught my eye, however, was something called the *CMS61* by Fatar. This 61-note keyboard features a shelf made for your computer keyboard to sit on, and provides a special space for a mouse pad. With the aid of a movable bar, the mouse pad can be set up for left or right handers making a great work area for all us computer musicians. The keyboard retails for \$479 and is one of those things that seems so obvious it's a wonder that nobody has built one before now.

Mackie. Over at the Mackie Booth the big news was their *Universal Automation Package*. It plugs in through the insert points of a mixer and can be used with anybody's product. Some of the features are, you don't need a computer, it responds to SMPTE or House SYNC, and you can group up to three of them together. There is a separate 34 fader controller called OTTO PILOT, which is optional, but recommended, and the whole package will go for around \$3,000, with a release date of somewhere around summer. They were also showing their *LM-3204*, which is essentially a CR-1604 in a smaller space with lots more inputs. It will retail for \$995 and will be released at the end of April.

To compliment their 8-Bus Mixers, they were showing the new *24-fader expander module*, which retails for \$3,000. You can now slap another 24 faders onto your 32-input console and end up with 112 inputs including the "B" mix for around \$8,000 list. Another add on is what they call the *Side Car*. It's an 11-rack space unit, which is at the same level as their mixer stand and could provide space for power supplies, patch bays, or whatever. For \$300 it's a great value.

CAD. Elsewhere on the Mixer Front, the people from CAD were showing off their wares. If you're not familiar with their products, they are completely modular, so that you can design a system that meets your exact needs. Because of their modular nature it means that if one part of the system goes down you're not out of business; you just get that part repaired and keep working with the other parts. The component parts are a group of four faders, which retails for \$1,549, and a group of eight inputs, which retails for \$2,099. On the Output side, the Type 1 has eight group outs and retails for \$1,800 and the Type 2 is 8x24 and goes for around \$4,000. Other than that,

they sell you the specific size frame you need, as well as meter bridges or stands, and there you have your custom mixing console.

Soundcraft. In the Soundcraft booth they were showing their Spirit Console. It comes in 16, 24, and 32 input configurations and features a "B" mix input doubling the number of inputs. They have two sets of EQs with two for the "B" mix and four for the "A", or they can be grouped together. They told me about their Automation package, which can be run independently or with software from a computer. The 16-input unit without automation goes for \$4,275, and the 32-input one goes for about \$8,000.

Alesis. At the Alesis Booth, they were showing their new X-2 mixing console, which is also modular. Only instead of being in groups of four or eight like the CAD, each fader can come out independently. It comes in only one configuration 24x8x2, and features 4-band EQ with sweepable Mid, eight Aux sends with eight stereo returns, and dynamic mute automation to 72 mute points. The big feature is that it connects directly to their ADAT digital multi-track recorder, and has direct connections for their new Quadrasynt. Put them all together, add a couple of Alesis speakers and an Alesis power amp, and you've got what they call their "Dream Studio." (Pretty spiffy, huh?) The mixer retails for about \$8,000 and the Quadrasynt goes for about \$1,500. I think you know what the ADAT goes for.

Fostex. And while we're talking ADAT, just up the road in the Fostex booth, they were showing their ADAT based digital multi-track, the *RD-8*. The unit is completely compatible with ADAT tapes, with the big difference coming in the area of synchronization. The RD-8 has a built-in SMPTE/EBU Time Code Generator/Reader that supports all formats, and it can jam sync to an external time code source either LTC or VITC. It can also perform Pull-Up and Pull-Down operations for video/film transfers. As of right now, the only thing I can find that it does not do is respond to MIDI Machine Code for sequencers, but they assure me it will be here shortly. For those of you doing video and film projects out of your home studio, this looks like a great product. Even if you've already got an ADAT, you can add this unit and run them together. For a list price of \$4,795 the RD-8 deserves a look.

Lexicon. At Lexicon they had some new products that sounded great. "Vortex" is a digital signal processor that produces a wide range of special effects including modulation, spatialization, echoes and looping. Along with this is something they call "Audio Morphing." According to their literature, Morphing generates a complete parametric and algorithmic restructuring of two independent stereo effects. Simply stated, it is a cross fade with some interesting ramifications, which can take place in from .01 to 10 sec-

onds. The unit sells for \$479 and has some unique sounds.

Also, they showed *Jam Man*, which is an Echo Unit that can be used as a Sampler, and for making Loops. The base unit has eight seconds, expandable to 32. It retails for \$459.

Akai. Over at Akai they were showing their hard disk based recording system, the *DR4d*. This standalone 4-track system is very impressive with 100 cue points, which can be instantaneously accessed. Also, it has full Cut, Copy, and Paste editing. It can be synchronized with a sequencer or video and can dump the data to DAT at 2Xs normal speed. A neat feature is that, unlike tape based systems that take time to synchronize multiple units, when you link more than one DR4d, they instantly synchronize. With built-in hard drive, the unit retails for \$2,500; without the hard drive it goes for about \$1,800. This is a great unit at a very good price and, at \$5,000 for an 8-track setup, compares very favorably with the DA-88 and ADAT. Not to mention the fact that you would need two DA-88s or ADATs to do digital editing that can be done on only one DR4d.

Digidesign. Digidesign was in a room off the main floor and stocked its booth primarily with third-party providers. They seem to have become the defacto system for professional recording of digital audio to hard disk, consequently many other companies have jumped on the band wagon. Some of the more interesting products I saw there were *Postview*, which integrates digital video and digital audio with VTR Control Software for Pro Tools. With this system you can load your video into the computer and manipulate it right along with your audio.

Also, there was *SampleCell II*. The new software offers 32 voice polyphony, has dynamic digital filtering, and 2 tracking generators with 9 editable points each.

For the sound effects editors, they were showing *MasterList CD*. This software is the link between the digital audio workstation and the Compact Disk sound effects library. Keeping track of all the sound effects is made very simple and, with the addition of Sound Designer II, stereo tracks can be EQed, processed, or cross faded.

And there you have it, all the NAMM that I could shove into these aching eyes and weary legs. For any questions or suggestions, please don't hesitate to write, FAX, or call:

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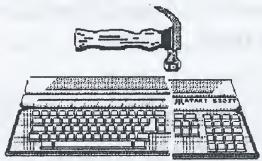
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 #785—Tuzzle, Space War, Centipede, PunkMan
 #786—Evader, Mystic, Psycho Worlds, Vegas BJ
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 #796—Naarjek III, Club Dominoes*, Insect A, Galaxians.
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 #806—Barnyard, Dark Pearl, Invaders, Lucky Guess, Hangman 2.01.
 #807—Talking Jumble, Alphabet Monkey, Super Jumble.(M)
 #808—Search & Find, Talking Mumbo Jumble.
 #809—GemView 2.23
 #810—Planetarium (M)
 #811—Agitation w/16 Puzzles.
 #812—Octalyser (STe) Music Editor
 #813—That's Write 2.0*, MultiWriter*, Master Browse*.
 #814—Marcel*, Mini Ledger*, EmailMan*, Mailing Manager ST*
 #815—Papyrus Word Processor*
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 #817—Outline Art 3.0*, True Paint*
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 #828—Polar Ice, Cybernetix.
 #829—Telecom #8: Air Warrior 2.0e, Aladdin 1.4, Aladdin Show 0.2, Aladdin Browse, GEnie's Assistant, Aladdin's Magic Browser, Aladdin Script Manual, Aladdin 1.6, ST Aladdin Script Tutorial, QuickCIS 1.71.
 #830—Buttonz Awaril*
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ST TOOLBOX



by J. Andrzej Wrotniak

Naked Atari Developers Terrorizing a Computer Show

Imagecopy 2, Geneva Update, and What's New in the World Outside?

Imagecopy 2

My graphic needs are rather simple, mostly limited to making screen snapshots to be inserted into DTP programs, and converting pixel-mapped images between different formats. On the other hand, in almost eight years of using my ST, I was unable to find two simple utilities to match these needs.

One of these utilities is a screenshot grabber: reliable, simple to use, not requiring an access to the menu bar, and, last but not least, capable of grabbing snapshots of screens in many various resolutions—not just the three basic ST ones.

I also need a program to convert images between a number of formats: Degas (compressed or not), IMG, PCX, BMP and others.

My search for these utilities was not very successful. The image converters offered a limited choice of formats they could understand (and, especially, convert images to), and screen grabbers usually would not handle resolutions other than the original ST High/Med/Low triad. (Those few that would, had other limitations and inconveniences built-in by design.)

My wait seems to be over. Merging both functions into one program (and throwing in a viewing and printing capability), is *Imagecopy 2*, written for the ST Club in Great Britain by Mr. Jeremy Hughes, and distributed in the States by the Codeheads, who know a good piece of software when they see one.

With a street price of about \$30, *Imagecopy 2* is a bargain, and a utility I wouldn't be without. A full review by John Godbey appears elsewhere in this issue of *Current Notes*; for now let me share with you some of my experiences after two weeks of using the program at work and at home.

Imagecopy 2 is a nicely designed and competently implemented program with well-defined tasks that it promises to perform and it performs them very well. The user interface is thoughtful, clear and easy to use; no minor annoyances here.

The image grabbing function of *Imagecopy 2* worked flawlessly in all resolutions I've tried it in. This includes ST High and Medium, TT High (960*1200 pixels monochrome) emulated with use of Derek Mihocka's *MonSTER* utility, TT Medium (480*640 pixels in 16 colors), and some resolutions I use from time to

time on my *GEMulator*, like the monochrome resolutions of 480*640 and 600*800 pixels.

You can set the default format of the saved images to any of the long list of standards supported by the program, and either the full screen or its rubberbanded fragment will be saved. No, you do not need an access to the menu bar, just the old Alt-Help key combination will do, as long as *Imagecopy 2* is installed as a desktop accessory.

My only (minor) complaint here is that the default names for saved files, suggested by the program, do not take into account any files already present in the directory; this can be easily improved.

The image conversion also works fine. I needed some IMG files made from the PC-DOS standard PCX files and from the Windows BMP ones. No sweat, simple and easy. This includes dithering of color images into monochrome.

Yet, here comes another complaint: when converting from the ST Medium resolution into monochrome, *Imagecopy 2* disregards the non-square aspect of the former. This produces images which may be true, in the pixel-by-pixel sense, but compressed vertically—in other words, useless. This is, obviously, a design decision, but, for me at least, a weird one.

The program comes in two versions: a desktop accessory and a stand-alone application. To make screen snapshots, you need to use the accessory version, which has all functionality of the stand-alone program including image conversion. This is sometimes handy (for example, you may convert images without leaving your DTP program), but comes with a price: it uses about 270k of your precious memory.

For those of us who are still using machines with one MB or less of RAM, the 270k necessary just to make screen snapshots may be a steep price. Having a stripped-down accessory version, capable of just screen grabbing (in a default format, for later conversion by the full program) would be very, very nice. Still, if you have lots of memory, you may be willing to make the sacrifice.

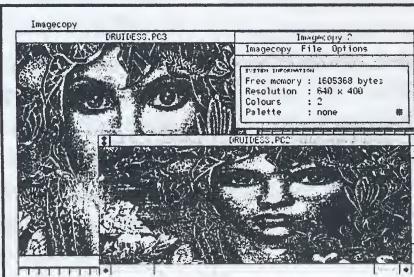


Figure 1. Here is what I am complaining about: the bottom window shows an ST Medium picture as it is translated into monochrome by *Imagecopy 2*. The top window shows the result of using another conversion program. The whole screen has been generated in the "regular" ST High resolution, on my 8-year-old ST with 2.5 MB of RAM and TOS 1.4.

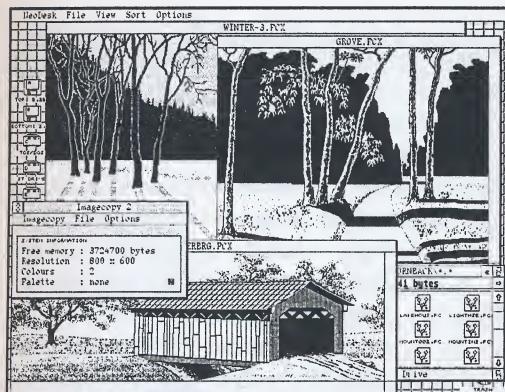


Figure 2. Here I am using *Imagecopy 2* on my GEMulator-equipped PC, to view a number of public domain PCX images in the 600*800 monochrome display mode. By the way, with this conversion program you can gain access to a vast library of images from almost any imaginable computer platform!

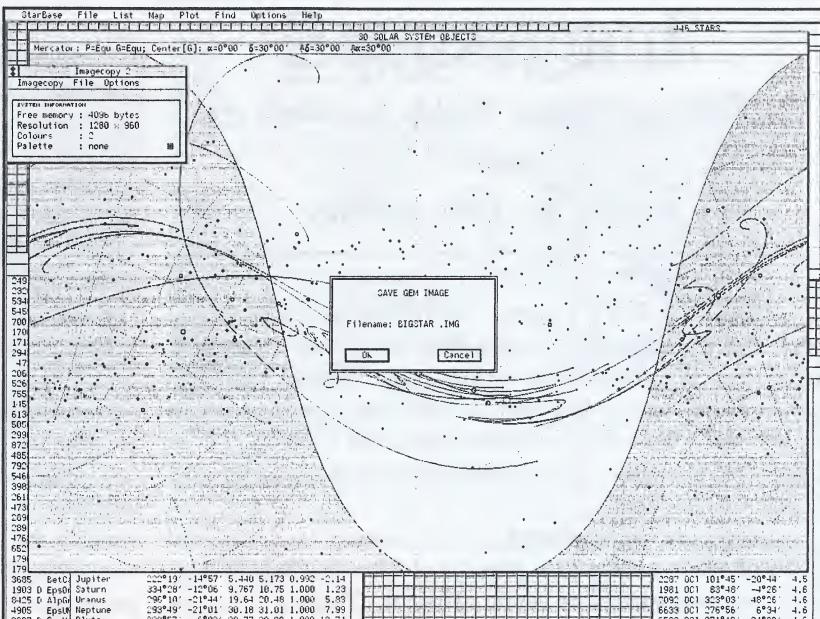


Figure 3. A screen shot of a screen shot being taken of my Star Base screen in the TT high (or moniterm) 960*1280 mode. I do not have a TT (what would you expect from a poor immigrant?) so I had to use my ST with the Monster big screen emulator. Everything works like a charm.

To sum it up: *Imagecopy 2* is the best (existing, even if not imaginable) screen grabber and image converter I have yet seen on the ST.

I like it and I find it *very* useful. I hope you will. And, knowing the CodeHeads' track record in improving the software they sell, I would expect the program to only get better with time. Buy it.

Geneva Update

An update of the multitasking *Geneva* (see the Dec/Jan issue of *Current Notes*) has been released recently by Gribnif Software. A patch to upgrade the program to the current Version 1.02 is available on GEnie, in Library 21, or can be ordered from Gribnif for a nominal fee.

As my brief experience with V1.02 indicates, the number of applications running properly under *Geneva* has increased. In particular, memory leakage and misbehavior of some dialog boxes no longer occur.

There are still some problems, but even at the present stage, if you have two megabytes (MB) of memory and a hard drive, you may find *Geneva* not only an impressive programming feat, but also a way to increase your productivity.

More Power in Your Pocket

In February '92 I wrote about the HP95LX Palmtop, a PC-DOS computer fitting into your pocket. I still have one, and it is the most heavily used of my computers.

Last year, Hewlett-Packard increased their lead in the palmtop computing field by introducing the HP100LX. The new model, still of the same pocketable size, has one MB of built-in RAM, which can be divided between the DOS RAM and a RAMdisk, and runs under DOS 5 (full, as opposed to "sort-of," compatibility!).

The screen has been greatly enhanced: the default display is now 18 lines by 64 characters, but it can be switched into

the more readable 95LX resolution of 16*40, or into the full CGA display, translated into monochrome-25*80 characters or 200*640 pixels.

More than two MB of built-in (ROM-based) software are provided, including, like before, the full version of *Lotus 1-2-3*, and a new, very powerful and highly customizable database, which can be used as a starting block for more specialized applications.

Just this January, Hewlett-Packard introduced a new version of the 100LX, with two MB of RAM on-board. All this for the list price of \$750 (the one MB version is now \$550). With an optional 20 MB RAMdisk card (non-volatile, i.e. not requiring a battery!) and with 10-20 hours of operation on a pair of AA alkalines, this baby blows away any competition.

Yes, I know, historically the Atari Portfolio was the first such machine on the market. This was long ago, and the cute little computer turned out to be a dead alley of evolution. Sad.

A New Wave of Macs

The industry is bracing itself for a new storm. While Intel is following the line of "very big, very beautifully polished stone tools" with its 386/486/Pentium sequence, a consortium consisting of IBM, Motorola and Apple announced expected availability of the new PowerPC chip.

This is not a me-too effort. An entirely new design, a powerful RISC (Reduced Instruction Set) processor, it can be used to run either DOS or Macintosh software. (One can even imagine one computer doing both at the same time!)

Apple recently announced their plans to move the whole Mac line to the PowerPC (starting from the mid- and top-of-the line models), with the "old" (680x0-based) applications running out of the box. They also promise an upgrade

(Continued on page 23.)

Imagecopy 2

The Essential Image Utility for Atari Computers

Review by John Godbey

Imagecopy 2 is a program for viewing and printing images, and for converting images from one format to another. In addition to working with various image formats, it will do screen dumps and screen saves in black and white or color. It works with a wide range of image types, and in all ST, TT, or Falcon video modes. It is an excellent utility for the Atari line of computers.

Imagecopy is distributed in this country by CodeHead Software. It is originally a product of The ST Club in England, and was written by Jeremy Hughes. (Hughes is the author of *Fontkit*, another excellent Atari utility.) I tested *Imagecopy v2.01* using a Mega STE and an HP Deskjet 500C printer.

Imagecopy comes on two disks, which contain several versions of the program and sample images in various formats. Versions of the program are included for stand alone use, or for accessory use. There is also an additional small program that can be installed as an application, and will call either the accessory or stand alone version of the program when activated. After some experimenting, I decided that the accessory version was much more convenient than either of the other two versions, and it was the only one used from then on.

I ran *Imagecopy* with *Multi Desk* with no significant problems. (I originally had a problem getting *Imagecopy* to work as an accessory from inside a few programs; but I resolved the problem by increasing *MultiDesk's* reserve buffer.) Although the manual has a section on possible conflicts and incompatibilities between *Imagecopy* and other programs, I found no incompatibilities with my own use of the program.

Imagecopy will read the following image formats:

Art director	OS/2 bitmap
DEGAS (reg & comp)	PC Paintbrush
GIF	Spectrum
IFF	TARGA
IMG (normal/extended)	TIFF
MacPaint	Tiny Windows bitmap
Neochrome	

It can save images in the following formats:

- * DEGAS (regular and compressed)
- * IMG(normal/extended)
- * RSC free image
- * Targa (uncompressed and RLE compressed)
- * TIFF (uncompressed and RLE compressed)

(If the different formats are unfamiliar to you, you can refer to *Imagecopy's* manual, which contains a clear discussion of them in an Appendix.)

Installation

Imagecopy runs "as is." Copy the accessory version to the boot directory with your other accessories, reboot, and it is ready to go. The program is easily reconfigured for your own set up and preferences.

When *Imagecopy* is run, a small window with several drop down menus appears. The program is configured using several of these menus—simply select the appropriate configuration, and click on the "Save" button, and your selected configuration becomes the default configuration. The most important setting is for the appropriate printer. It supports 9-pin and 24-pin Epson compatible dot-matrix printers; IBM and Epson compatible inkjet printers; and HP Deskjet and Laserjet printers. (Note: The Atari laser printer is *not* supported.)

Imagecopy is an extremely flexible program. It allows adjustment of the size and resolution in which an image will be printed, the format in which images will be saved, and numerous other features concerning the quality of the display or printout. All of these default features can be changed on the fly. For example, if you normally print at 300 dpi, but want to print out an image half that resolution, it is a simple matter to make the change before printing.

Use

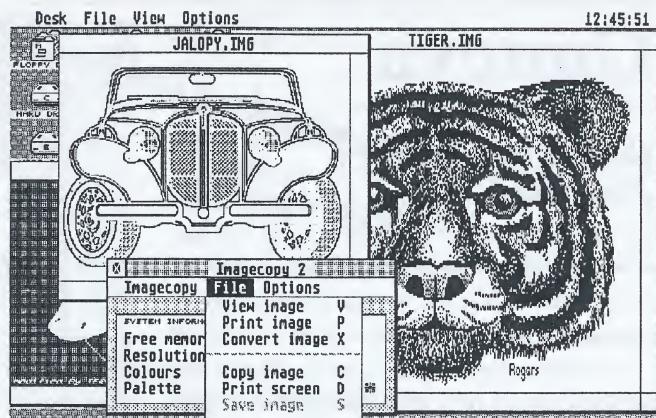
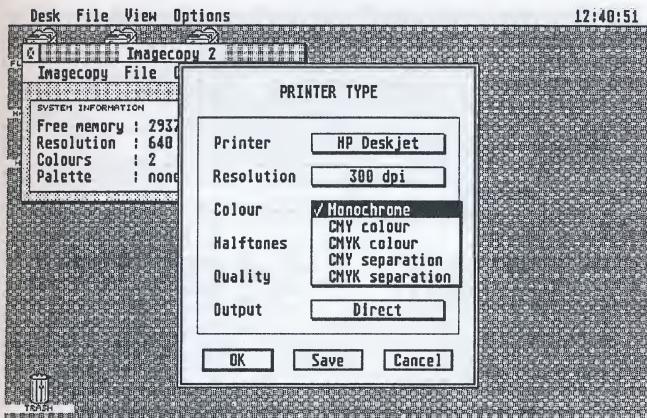
Imagecopy has the most flexible screen dump of any program I have seen. The program can be configured so that Alternate-Help, Control-Alternate-Help, and Shift-Alternate-Help can be used for either a screen dump, a screen save, or so that they have no effect at all. The screen saves can be in any of the formats listed above, and the print-outs can be in black and white or color. Finally, both screen saves and dumps can be of either the entire screen, or any part of it. For example, if you configure *Imagecopy* to print the screen when Alternate-Help is pushed, then, when that combination is pressed, a dialog box appears and gives you the choice of printing the entire screen, part of the screen, or cancelling the print-out. If you hit return, the entire screen prints. If you want to print only part of the screen, then you can use the mouse pointer to draw a box around any part of the screen, and only that part will be printed. The screen save works similarly.

When used as an accessory, images can be viewed, printed, or saved from any program that allows access to the accessory menu. In fact, you may find the accessory version of *Imagecopy* more convenient to use than some program's own printing feature.

Images in any of the supported formats can be loaded for viewing. They can be saved in any of the supported formats. Images can be printed directly from the screen, or a file can be printed without first displaying the image. Color images can be printed in either color or black and white.

Color

In addition to printing monochrome images, *Imagecopy* will print in CMY color (cyan, magenta, and yellow), CMYK color, CMY separation, and CMYK separation. I have



printed color only with the HP Deskjet 500C, and have observed excellent results. The CMY separation will, in theory anyway, allow color printing with black and white printers. The program will separate the image into its primary colors, and print each separately. By printing the same page three times, and using different color ribbons or ink, color should result. The manual has a fairly long section on this, and claims that it works well with deskjet printers. (I have not tested this feature.)

Displaying and printing color can be a difficult task, but *Imagecopy* seems to me to do both well. It is extremely flexible in controlling color. You can adjust the colors that are displayed or printed, adjust their brightness, contrast, saturation, balance, dithering, and so on. Each of the features seems to work as advertised, and, between them all, you can spend as much time and paper as you wish trying to get the perfect print-out.

Comparison

I compared the printouts made with *Imagecopy* to those of three other programs with similar features:

HP Chrome v.2.2: This is an excellent shareware program for printing Degas images. Its main drawback is that it only works with Degas images.

PrintAll v. 1.1: This is an excellent "freeware" program that allows viewing and printing images of Degas, Spectrum, GIF and a few other formats. Its principle limitation is that it only works with DeskJet printers.

PicSwitch v. 1.0: This program is designed for viewing images, but it also has fairly flexible printing ability (but in black and white only).

For the comparison, I printed out a color .GIF image in both black and white and color, and a Degas image in color, and compared the speed and quality of the printout. *Imagecopy* was clearly the winner in speed. It was faster in both black and white and in color—often nearly twice as fast. The quality comparison is subjective. I found no significant difference in the black and white printouts. However, *Imagecopy* seemed to my eye to be marginally better than *HP Chrome* with Degas printouts. I couldn't detect any meaningful difference between the color prints from *PrintAll* and *Imagecopy*.

It is when the total number of features are compared that *Imagecopy* seems to me to be clearly superior to the others. In

terms of formats and printers supported; in terms of flexibility and ease of use; none of the other programs—or any other Atari program with which I am familiar—is in the same league with *Imagecopy*.

Conclusion

Imagecopy does what it does so well, that my criticisms of it are mainly of what it doesn't do. As I noted earlier, it doesn't support the Atari Laser Printer. Since it is doubtful that any program can keep up with the ever increasing number of image formats, every user will have his own disappointment that one of his favorite formats is not supported. I would like to see it support the JPEG compression scheme. I find this used more and more on the Compuserve graphics forums.

If you view or print images with your Atari, then you need a copy of *Imagecopy* 2. In quality and versatility, this program is unmatched.

[*Imagecopy* 2, (c) 1993 by Jeremy Hughes and The ST Club. Distributed by CodeHead Software, PO Box 74090, Los Angeles CA 90004; (213) 386-5735; FAX (213) 386-5789.]

ST Toolbox (continued from page 21.)

quire a new motherboard, while the high-end ones will need just chip swapping. Later on, the Mac software will be rewritten in the more efficient native PowerPC mode (i.e. not using the Motorola emulation).

And who said we are living in boring times?

Naked Atari Users?

OK, I have a confession to make. When it came to inventing the title for today's column, I suddenly found myself in a writer's block. This is why I resorted to this cheap and low trick with the title having nothing to do with the column itself, but sounding sensational enough to attract your attention—well, at least some people started reading this issue from my piece!

Am I ashamed of myself? Yes, and justly so. Am I going to do something like this again in the future? No, unless I *really* need to.

Geneva

Review by
Jim Fouch

Multitasking for the
Rest of Us

Introduction

In this review I will cover the basic features of *Geneva* and the concept of a multitasking environment. I will not go into detail about every feature in *Geneva*. It's simply too big a program to cover in a single issue. I will try to give a basic feel for *Geneva* and what it does. I will take a more indepth look at some individual features in a future issue of *Current Notes*. However, I think this will be enough to whet your appetite for multitasking.

Enter Geneva

I think someone has finally got it right. Over the last few years, we have seen a few products come and go that claim to give your Atari ST multitasking capabilities. The ones I have seen really only allow you to manually switch from one program to another, each existing in its own part of memory. Notice I say existing, because that's exactly what they do. They are not running at the same time. Only the one in the foreground is actually running. The others are dormant/sleeping. I call this type of operation, manually task switching.

ST owners have always had a type of multitasking on the ST from day one. It's called a desk accessory. Most do not really multitask. But with some, like *Shadow*, you could start a download then go run some other application while *Shadow* receives your file in the background. This type of multitasking, however, is very limited.

Enter *Geneva* from Gribnif Software, a new TRUE Multitasking Application Environment based on the concept of cooperative multitasking. This is not the same type of multitasking program we have seen surface over the last few years. It's actually practical to use; you don't need to have eight megabytes of RAM or a 200 MB hard disk to use it. Unlike its MS-DOS counter part, *Windows*, which takes up over six megabytes of hard disk space and over two megabytes of RAM, *Geneva* requires about 330K of disk space and less than 200K of RAM.

Why Multitask?

You may be asking yourself why would you want to multitask. Maybe you feel comfortable with your current relationship with your computer. Why would you want to change all that. Maybe it does all the things you want it to. Or maybe you just like sitting in front of your screen waiting for a 100K file to download while you twiddle your thumbs.

With a multitasking environment, you can be more productive with your computing time. Just think, while a file is

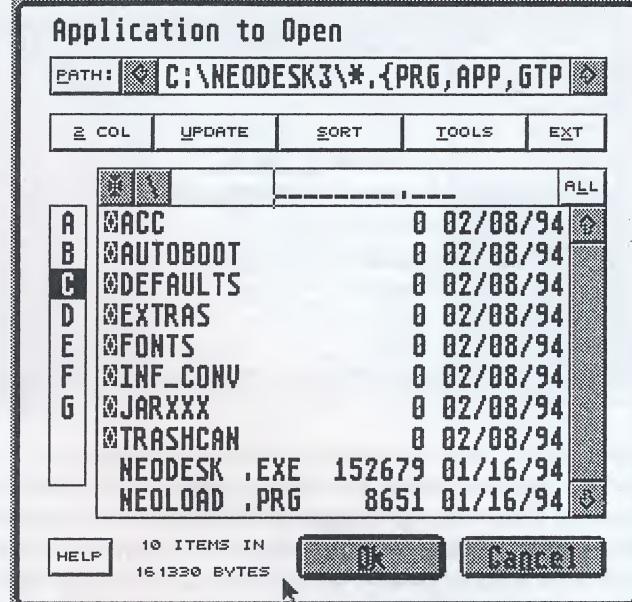


Figure 1: *Geneva* has its own built-in file selector.

being downloaded, you could be reading a text file, or maybe working on your budget, or you could be playing a game.

As we will cover later, most current software does not take full advantage of a multitasking environment. Hopefully, many developers will update their software. This will increase your productivity with your computer even further.

To NeoDesk or Not To NeoDesk, That Is the Question

When *Geneva* is run, it overlaps your standard desktop. This is the only way *Geneva* is able to accomplish true multitasking. The functions you normally access on the desktop are not available. Through a built-in file selector (see figure 1) *Geneva* allows you to run programs, copy files, move files, etc.. This is fine; however, you lose the look and feel of the desktop you have come to love.

To overcome this problem, you can use a shell or replacement desktop to do these functions. *NeoDesk* (figure 2, running in the background under *PageStream*) just happens to be one such program. Many people seem confused whether *NeoDesk* is needed to use *Geneva*. The answer is NO, you do not NEED *NeoDesk* to use *Geneva*. As a matter of fact, you don't need to use any desktop to take advantage of *Geneva*'s multitasking capabilities.

Note, you do not have to use *NeoDesk*, you can use another desktop like the PD *TeraDesk*. However, you cannot run more than one application from that desktop. You can run one application, then go back through *Geneva*'s *Task Manager* and run another. But, this seems to make things much more difficult than it would be to just use *NeoDesk*. Gribnif has a package deal to buy *Geneva* and *NeoDesk* for one reasonable price.

Also, *Geneva* comes with a patch program to update older versions of *NeoDesk* (3.0x) to the new version 3.04. I

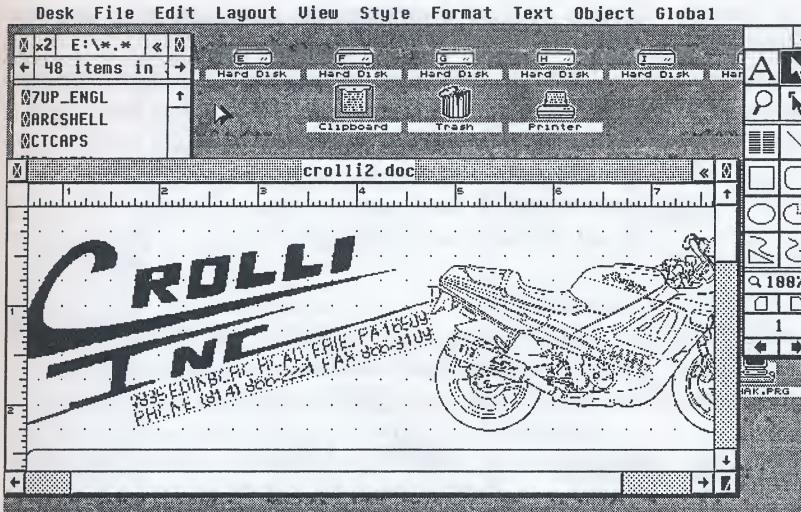


Figure 2: *Pagestream* running under *Geneva* with *NeoDesk*.

will not go into detail of the features of *NeoDesk*. That would take a complete review in itself. Gribnif is working on *NeoDesk 4*, which will support multitasking to a greater degree. It should be available by the time you read this review.

More Than Just a Multitasking Environment

Geneva is not just another multitasking program. It does much more than act as a Multitasking Environment. It changes the whole way you use your computer. One of the first things you'll notice is the new 3-D buttons and window gadgets, thanks to a very extensive overhaul to the AES of your ST. The AES is the part of the operating system that handles the drop-down menus, windows, and dialog boxes. This overhaul updates the AES to be similar to Atari's version 4.0. Simply put, this is the version on the new Falcon 030. I am not sure if *Geneva* updates ALL the AES or just part of it.

With this update to the AES, you can have more than the standard limit of seven windows open at one time; 256 to be exact. Some older programs cannot take advantage of this new limit; most were written before anyone ever expected to have a limit higher than seven. The limit of 256 applies to ALL applications running. For example, if you have an older program that can only use seven, you could have another program use more.

Interaction with the GEM drop-down menus has also been greatly improved. You no longer have to use the mouse to activate a menu, you simply press the [Alternate] key and space bar to activate the drop-down menus. Now, with the use of the arrows, you can walk the menu. Once you have highlighted the menu selection you want, simply press the [Return] key. This method will save you from grabbing the mouse every few seconds. Also, once you have activated this feature, each menu option has one letter underlined. Simply press this letter to select that menu option.

Another neat feature of *Geneva* is the ability to tear-off any drop-down menu and place it in its own window. See figure 3. This allows you to simply click on the menu instead of having to pull it down again.

You can change the appearance of the GEM windows to your liking. For example, you can reduce text font size in all GEM windows thus allowing more text in the same area of screen. The size of the sliders can also be adjusted to suit your needs.

System Requirements

Geneva is not a memory hog, either on your drive or in RAM. Once *Geneva* is installed, it only takes 330K disk space and 200K RAM.

The manual states, "It will run on any Atari ST, Mega ST, STe, Mega STe, STacy, ST Book, TT or Falcon030 computer, in all screen resolutions." Gribnif did a great job of including every Atari computer owner. However, the multitasking capabilities of a 512K ST will be very limited at best. The ad for *Geneva* recommends you have two megabytes of RAM.

I'm not really sure how a 520ST owner would benefit from *Geneva*. The real point of a multitasking environment is to load and run more than one application at one time. Most powerful programs recommend one megabyte or more to run. Once installed on my 1MB 520ST, I had less than 512K free after *Geneva* and *NeoDesk 3.04* were loaded. The manual suggests you run *Geneva* without *NeoDesk* on a 512K machine. This should leave about 200K for any programs you want to run.

Geneva does not require a fast processor such as the ones in the TT/030 and Falcon030. A base 8Mhz 68000 is fine. Of course, a faster 16 or 32Mhz 68030 or even a 16Mhz 68000 wouldn't hurt any. *Geneva* takes very little overhead to run. I

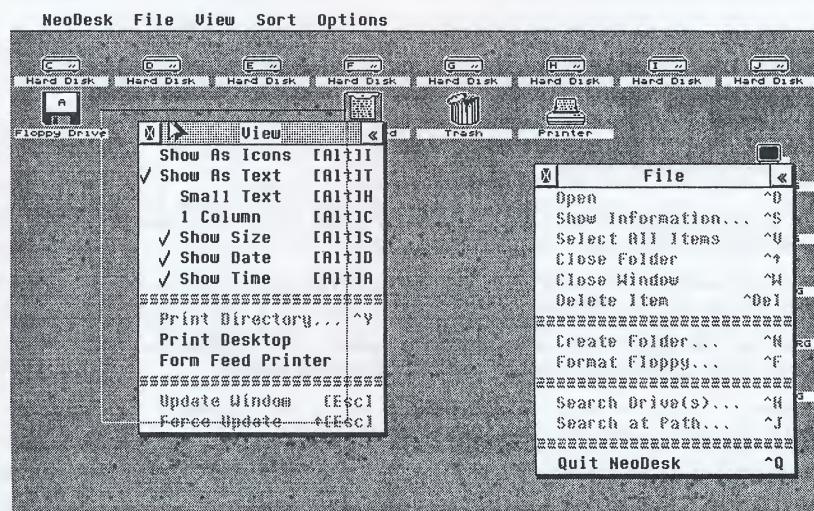


Figure 3. *Geneva*'s tear-off drop-down menus can be placed anywhere on the screen.

noticed next to no slowdown. Of course, if you are running several applications at the same time, and they are doing something, you will notice a slowdown. Most applications, such as word processors, take very little processing time when they are idle. Most of the time they are waiting for you to press a key or something.

Installation

Before I explain the installation procedure, I would like to describe the systems on which I installed *Geneva*. My main system is a TT/030 with six megabytes RAM, a super VGA color monitor and a 19" Moniterm monitor, and a 240MB hard drive. I also have a smaller 520ST with 1MB RAM, monochrome monitor, and 20MB hard drive.

Geneva comes on a double-sided 720K floppy disk. The only copy protection is that each copy needs to be registered under your name. This is done with a register program that writes your name and a serial number to your copy of *Geneva*. I think this is a very good type of copy protection. It doesn't limit the use of the product while still keeping people from illegally giving copies away.

Installing *Geneva* is very easy. An INSTALL program included will do ALL the work for you. It simply asks a few questions about how you would like *Geneva* installed, basically, what drive and what shell, if any, to use. The whole process took about 10-15 minutes and was as easy as one could have hoped.

Manual

The 167-page manual comes in a three ring loose leaf binder sized 5.5 x 8.5 inches. It's well laid out and has a nice index, making it easy to find information very quickly. The quality of the print is easy to read. There are a fair number of illustrations to help get the points across.

The manual seems to do a good job of keeping *Geneva* as simple as possible. It's not loaded down with technical talk to confuse the average user. In the back, is a chapter that explains to programmers how to make their programs *Geneva*

friendly. As I am a programmer, I can appreciate this very much.

To aid this well done manual there is on-line help (figure 4) within the software itself. Most dialog boxes have a help button. Simply click on this button, and a window pops open with text describing the current screen. This on-line help is very useful. It has hyper-text indexing. Much of the time, you will not even have to open the manual.

Compatibility

As I don't have every program for the ST/TT, I can't give a complete listing of software that is compatible with *Geneva*. I can say, however, that most every program I have does run.

Currently, most software in the Atari market place was written before we had a multitasking environment. Most programmers think their program will be the ONLY one in memory at any given time. For this very reason, most programs have no idea how to act well with others sharing their computer. But, surprisingly, thanks to the good job *Geneva* does, most programs do behave. Usually, if a program has a drop down menu and GEM windows, there is a good chance it will run in a multitasking environment.

So far, I have only seen a small problem with *Universal Item Selector v3.32*. After running for a short period of time, I can't select a new file while in *UIS*. Others on GEnie have had this same problem. Hopefully, this is a problem, either Gribnif or *UIS* will work out soon. This isn't a major inconvenience because the item selector with *Geneva* is very good and has just about as many functions.

Some programs simply will not multitask. If a program will not multitask, you can tell *Geneva* to run it in a single-tasking mode. Simply put, *Geneva* will put all other programs currently running to sleep. They don't lose any data or exit, they just stop running while the singletasking program runs in the foreground.

One such program that requires this is *Aladdin*. For some reason, it doesn't like to share your computer with anything else. This has been a problem for me, because I like to download programs in the background while doing something else. To over come this shortcoming of *Aladdin*, I just do what I have to do while online, then, when I want to do a download, I quit *Aladdin* without logging off GEnie. Then I run *Storm* and start the download from there.

Since *Storm* does do active multitasking, I simply go on to whatever else I want to do in another program, if that other program will also multitask.

One thing you should note; when some programs are doing some tasks, they hog the system. For example, when *PageStream* is creating or printing a document, you will not be able to do active multitasking. Maybe Soft-Logic will update *PageStream* to allow active multitasking while printing. Another program that does this is *LDW*. When you are do-

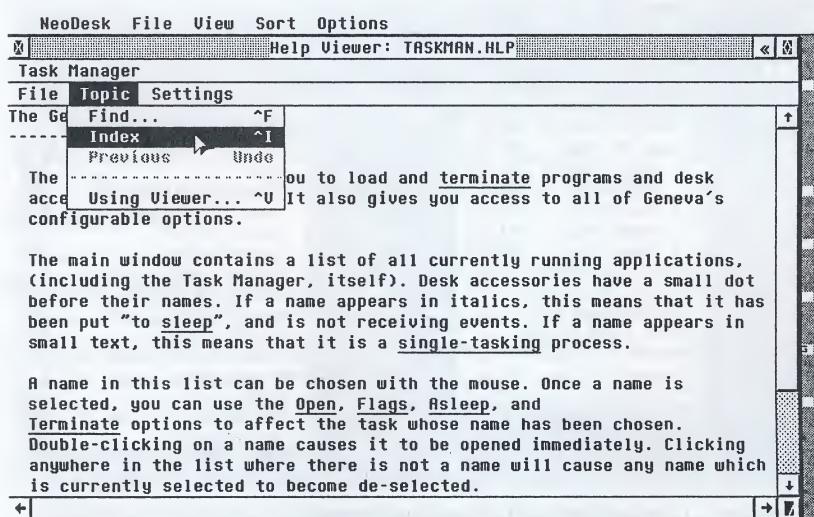


Figure 4. *Geneva* includes an online help facility.

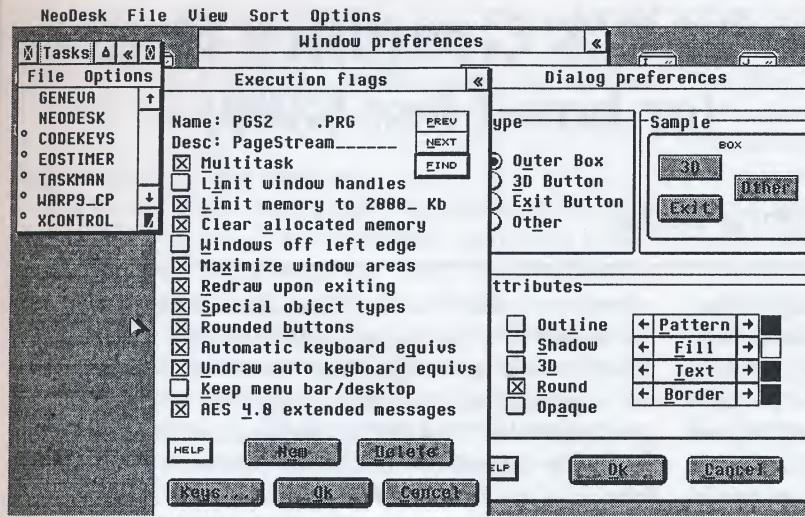


Figure 5. The Task Manager is the heart of *Geneva*.

ing a complex recalculation, you cannot access another application. I think the main problem is that, as I said above, these programs were not written with a multitasking environment in mind.

These developers cannot be charged with writing their software incorrectly if the rules changed *after* their software was written. However, I think they should support their users by making the appropriate changes to their software. One well known Atari developer recently stated on an on-line service, "If it takes an update to ***** to make its program-aware features compatible with *Geneva*, then the simple truth is that, given the current state of the Atari computer market (i.e. completely, utterly stagnant with a parent company that shows absolutely no indication of giving a d***), you're very unlikely to ever see that update."

Using *Geneva*

This part of the review is easy. *Geneva* does not require you to change the way you use your computer. It doesn't take any special skill. It simply makes your interaction more enjoyable.

Geneva is supplied with a program called the *Task Manager*. See figure 5. This is the heart of *Geneva*. Once the *Task Manager* is selected, it will list all active programs. The *Task Manager* is also the control center of *Geneva*. You can open (run) programs, put them to sleep, or terminate them.

The *Task Manager* also controls all the settings for *Geneva*. Flags, which control how a program is loaded and run, are set within the *Task Manager*. These flags are very important; they tell *Geneva* if a program should multitask, limit memory, use the new AES, etc.. Each program can have its own set of flags. *Geneva* has a number of default flags already set when it's installed.

One big benefit of *Geneva* is the ability to load desktop accessories like you would normal programs. Once you have loaded and run an accessory, you can terminate/exit it, thereby freeing up the memory it was using. There is no limit

to the number of programs/accessories you can load/run, except of course, for memory.

Once a few programs are running, you can switch among them in several ways. First, and easiest, is to press the Alternate and Tab keys. A second method is to go to the left most drop-down menu and select another program with the mouse. *Geneva* also allows you to define a combination of keys to call each application.

A special program, called *Geneva TOS*, is included to handle TOS programs. Because they expect to have the whole computer and screen to themselves, *Geneva TOS* opens a separate window for each TOS program run. You can have *Geneva TOS* change the text size so you could have many TOS programs running at the same time in their own corner of the screen.

Geneva seems very solid. I have not seen many programs bombing. Many programs that locked up the system when they bombed now just return you to *Geneva*. All other applications seem untouched when this happens.

You can switch resolution from within *Geneva*. It supports all the resolutions on the TT. I am not sure how well it works with the Falcon030 graphics modes. I can't see any reason it would not work with them, also.

Conclusion

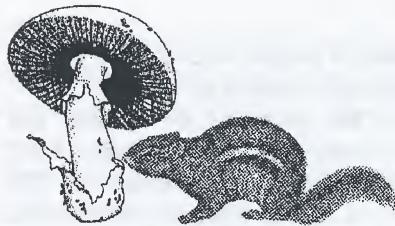
I cannot compare *Geneva* with other multitasking programs. I have read some on-line messages about MultiTOS. From what I did read, it appeared that some people were less than satisfied with it.

Geneva is supported on GEnie. The writer, Dan Wilga, is online just about every day. I was able to talk to Dan on the phone a few times. He was glad to help and was very interested to see that my questions were answered. It's nice to see a company this dedicated to the Atari market and its customers.

I have spent a month testing *Geneva*. I think it's a very well thought out program. I can honestly say that it has improved my productivity; I no longer have to wait for a file to be downloaded or extracted.

I thought I would save the best for last, the price. With all the power and features *Geneva* is packed with, you might expect to pay upwards of \$150. But, surprisingly, Gribnif is asking only \$69.95 for *Geneva* alone, and about \$99 for a package including *NeoDesk 3.04*. I believe this is a very reasonable price. I only wish they would have made this software five years ago. I will never use my computer again without *Geneva*.

I don't believe you will regret purchasing *Geneva*; I sure don't. *Geneva* brings a new breath of life to a computer many thought was left behind the times. Now your Atari will have all the conveniences of your *Windows* rivals. You no longer have to live in the past. Now is the time for the future.



The NOVA Graphics Board (or how I lost \$800)

Running Out of Ram by David Barkin

My *NOVA* graphics board will not work with my computer. I can run it, but in a very limited and unproductive way. Before I discuss the reasons for this failure, and the incredible attitude of *Lexicor Software*, I will give a review of the hardware, *as if it did work*. No doubt it works on some TT's, and probably has a higher success rate with Mega STe's and Mega ST's. At any rate, I'm going to play *pretend* and review the card.

I ordered my *NOVA* directly from *Lexicor*, early in October, of last year. I was informed that it would take from five to six weeks for delivery. I was also informed that, since this card must travel all the way from Europe, cash up-front. Since I told them that I would be reviewing the card for Current Notes, Lee Seiler, the owner, promised *special support*. Keep that in mind as you read this article. Exactly five and a half weeks later, it arrived at my door. I can't describe how excited I was over the arrival of this card. Lately, I've been making money doing photo restoration and collage work. This card promised to increase my productivity enormously.

The *NOVA* card is a sealed black rectangle, roughly, 8 inches long by 4 inches wide, by 2 inches high. Connected to this little black box by a seven inch ribbon cable, is the VME card, which plugs into the TT or Mega STe's, VME expansion slot. If you own a Mega ST then you receive a board with a connector for the Mega's internal slot. ST or Ste owners will have to wire the card in themselves. The only other opening in the board is the monitor receptacle on the side of the board.

Installing the NOVA

Installing the *NOVA* into the VME slot on my TT was no big problem. The card is just a touch too narrow, so that there is opportunity for it to slip off its guide. But by exercising a little caution, I had no trouble. I then plugged my VGA monitor into the monitor port on the *NOVA* box. Indeed, installing the card was the easiest part of installing the *NOVA*. I now reset my computer back onto my desk. I found that this was no easy matter. The *NOVA* now hung off the end of my desk and since there is no way to secure the card into the VME slot, it threatened to pull out of the computer. I solved this problem by rigging up a basket of string, which I suspended from the top of my desk, to the *NOVA*. I also disconnected the two serial ports of my TT. There is no way to secure them to the computer and rather then have them flopping around on my desk, I completely unplugged them.

To run the *NOVA*, or any card for that matter, software *must* be installed in the Auto folder of your boot drive. This software activates the card, selects the desired resolution and

a number of other necessary functions. Before I go into this, let me describe the manual. This document was all of 14 poorly printed laser pages. The installation of the hardware was adequately covered, but nothing else. There are quite a few files labeled "read me" on the software disk; too bad they were all in German. Owners of the German to English translator program, distributed by Current Notes, among others, will be thankful for owning that program. Even so, I eventually went out and bought a good German-English dictionary, to piece these read-me files together. There is, of course, an excellent little booklet, that comes from the manufacturer. This, too, was in German. Let me continue.

Using the Software

My version of the software came with an installation program. The program, while in German, seems easy enough to use. It turns out that this program was meant for software versions 1.68 and below, while the software I was using was version 2.02. One of the options, with this version of the install program, will actually disable the card. I found this out by laboriously translating the read-me file. I persevered and got everything correctly loaded into my auto folder. When you boot your computer you have a short period of time to get into the *NOVA* menu options. You can choose to use a key combination to get into the menu, or, to select three or five seconds, during which period, hitting any key will activate the menu.

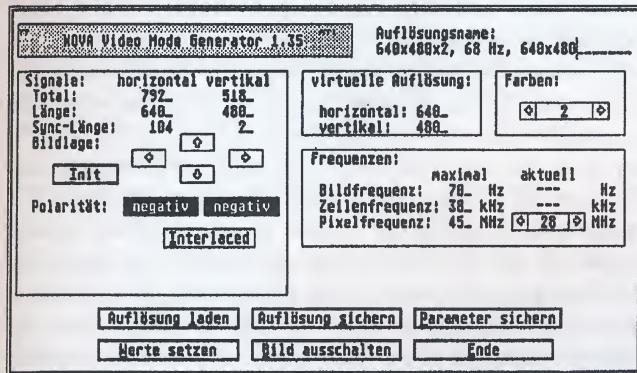
Here, once again, in German, is the main pre-boot dialogue. These options are very simple and the manual explained what they do. First, you select which resolution the computer should run in. Since my version of the *NOVA* was the cheaper of the 24 bit one's, I could choose 24 bit, in screen resolutions of 640 by 480 or less. If I wanted to choose 800 by 600 or 1024 by 768, I would also have to choose fewer colors. My version of the board has certain understandable limitations. But this menu option has many more variations then I've just described. I could pick between up to 22 different screen resolutions, where I could combine resolution and colors, limited only by the capability of my board and monitor.

The other options in the menu dialogue, were to select whether I was running an Atari monitor, or a VGA monitor, with or without GDOS. I could then save or not save all these selections and the computer would then boot. One might ask where these various selectable screen resolutions come from? This brings up another unfortunate aspect of the software. These selectable resolutions are defined as libraries. Each library of resolutions corresponds to a particular monitor.

There are only seven monitors covered by the software. If your monitor is not one of these lucky seven, then you turn to the provided VMG program where you can create libraries of resolutions for your particular monitor. Hopefully, you have available the specifications of your individual monitor.

Programming for Your Monitor

The manual gives a very cursory explanation of how this program runs. The main virtue of these instructions is that you are warned, in no uncertain terms, that punching in wrong screen resolutions, may, in fact, launch your monitor into joining the missing mars probe. To avoid this kind of adventure, you are cautioned to type in the maximum and minimum screen resolutions your monitor can take. Some of the options of this program are then given a cursory explanation, and from then on you are on your own. I became quite good at using this program and discovered a number of facets not even hinted at in the manual.



The VMG program. This program creates the various resolutions with which you set your monitor to display. Have fun.

Resolution Switcher

Many ST programs are written with a particular screen resolution in mind. They will not run directly with the *NOVA* in many of its higher resolutions. *Lexicor* provides you with a neat little program called *Resolution Switcher*. This program gets loaded into the auto file. You then create an ASCII text file for programs that *must* run in a particular resolution. For example, if *Word Perfect* will only run at 640 by 400, you type this information into your ASCII file, using a word processor. The information must be typed in a very defined way. The manual barely covered this, but by loading the German read-me file into my word processor, I figured out how this was done. Once this is accomplished, and the computer re-booted, *Resolution Switcher* reads the created .INF file. When the defined programs are run, the *NOVA* automatically resets your computer, to the desired resolution, thus allowing you to run programs that you would otherwise have to re-boot the computer to run. There is also an accessory you can use to set the size and position of your various new resolutions on your monitor.

How about speed? You can't run a software accelerator. This is understandable. A software accelerator would have to be written specifically for each brand of graphics board. *Codehead Software* would like to write such an accelerator;

unfortunately, *Lexicor* is unwilling to lend them a board. As it is, the *NOVA* compares favorably with *Warp 9* in terms of speed. In monochrome mode, it actually appears to run faster than *Warp 9* does.

In addition to my 24-bit version of the *NOVA*, which now sells for \$569, including shipping, there is the *Super NOVA*, which comes with twice as much memory, as well as a built-in graphics accelerator. This version sells for \$1,034 including shipping.

Briefly, this was a description of the *ideal* of the *NOVA* card. No doubt *most* ST and *some* TT owners will be able to make good use of it. Even for me, the board produced a hunger for higher resolutions. One quick example is *Calamus SL*. Normally, when I run *Calamus*, I switch between four or five perspectives. I zoom to half page, then back to full page. To get a close look at text, I zoom into quarter page, etc. Running *Calamus* at 800 by 600, with the *NOVA*, I could more or less, stick to half page and full page. At half page, I could *actually read* the text. The time saving is tremendous. There are now few waits for the screen to redraw. This is especially true with *Calamus*; its caching system allows almost instantaneous redraws of resolutions in memory. Thus, using a Graphic card has made me graphics card dependant.

After finding some poor fool out on Long Island to sell my burned out *NOVA* to, I went out and bought the *Cyrel Sunrise* card, by *Cybercube*, distributed by *DMC*. I sold the board for the sum of one dollar. I regret beating poor Cliff out of his money. The board, at least in reference to my computer, isn't worth that much, but I told him that if he couldn't get *Lexicor* to repair the board, since it was burned out following their support instructions, I would cheerfully return his money. This is something *Lexicor* refused to do for me. Of course, as a precaution, I moved, changed my phone number, and had extensive plastic surgery. Just what are my problems with this board and just what is *Lexicor's* support?

The Sad Tale of Lexicor Support

I've run through two *NOVA* boards. The first one would run in monochrome modes, crash if 16 colors were selected and run in 256 color modes. If I ran the board to view 32K or 16 million colors, the board appeared to be working, but would not display red in *Studio Photo*. *Retouche* would not run at all and *Calamus* would display an odd mosaic. In other words, I was working with what appeared to be a bad 8-bit board. As soon as I realized what my problem was, I called *Lexicor* only to be informed that Mr. Seiler was away. I was given the phone number of Mr. Yat Sui, The North American *NOVA* representative. After discussing this problem with him, he promised to call back and a couple of days later, he called. After confirming certain facts, i.e. I had deleted everything from my root directory and auto folder except for the *NOVA* software, we both agreed that the problem was with the board. I needed this board for my ongoing image processing work. I, therefore, shipped it on Monday, by overnight mail. I also included a check for \$20 to expedite shipping. After all, while the manufacturer may have to bear the expense of shipping, they certainly don't have to ship hardware by overnight mail.

Anxiously, I awaited his word. I finally called Yat Sui the following Monday and left a message on his machine. He promptly called my back to inform me that *there was nothing wrong with my board*. He then told me that TT's vary a bit, so he would replace the board with a different one, with slightly different timing. After another week and a half, this new board was delivered to me.

While Mr. Sui did not exert himself in shipping the new board, he did manage to cash my check. He had also told me that he would send me the latest version of the *NOVA* software and a new manual. A busy man, Mr. Sui sent me instead, a much older version of the software. He also sent me a 30-page, poorly xeroxed manual, which actually had less useful information than the original manual.

The new (old) software turned out to be a blessing. With the original board, I had been able to run *Word Perfect* and *Touch-up*, using the *Resolution Switcher* program. With the new board, and the original software, this was no longer possible. *But*, using the older *NOVA* software, I could use these programs. Unfortunately, using the older software, I could only run either in monochrome or 16 colors, while the original software ran much the same as before, except I couldn't use *Res Switch*. At this point I was booting and re-booting my computer just to tell the time of day. What was worse is that no version of either the board or software would run *Retouche*. While the list of compatible software that *Lexicor* provides is rather short, *Retouche* was one of the programs that was supposed to run with the board. When I say I couldn't run *Retouche*, I mean I couldn't use the program at *any resolution, with or without Res Switch*. This was becoming discouraging. I called Mr. Sui back repeatedly. Finally, around December 17th, I called *Lexicor*. Mr. Seiler was back. After discussing my problems with him, he informed me that this sounded like a hardware problem for Mr. Sui to solve, and that Mr. Sui, would return from Europe on January 7. In the meantime, he would send me *his personal NOVA* setup.

At this point, I decided to establish if there was anything wrong with either my computer, or perhaps my hard drive programs. I use the professional version of *ICD*'s hard drive software. Who knows, maybe my problems lay with that program? Taking no chances, I reformatted my hard drive and installed the Atari drivers. This program will not allow me to use my scanner, but I wanted to check any possibility, no matter how remote. No go. I reformatted my hard drive using the PD version of *ICD*'s software. Once again, no improvement. Finally, I restored my original *ICD* software.

I then hired a technician from New Jersey, to make a night call, to check my VME port. At the cost of \$150 he came over, plugged in a *Crazy Dots* board from *Gribnif Software*, put the board through its paces, did some more tests and announced there was nothing wrong with my machine. So much for that. I do believe that I left no stone unturned to help my hard working *Lexicor* support team. January 7th rolled around and I called Yat Sui. Instead of a machine, Mr. Sui's mother answered the phone. I left a message. Two days later, no response. I called again, reached his mother and left my phone number. She told me that Mr. Sui was out and would be back

shortly. I called again and spoke to his mother. During this conversation, she suddenly told me that she couldn't hear me and hung up. I called right back and the same procedure occurred. I called a third time and got Mr. Sui's answering machine. I left my number. Days later, no response. Finally, I called *Lexicor* in California and had an illuminating two hour discussion.

I had now had the *NOVA* board hanging out of my computer for, more or less, two months. I was getting *nothing* done. My DTP customers were getting a bit impatient with my delays. I told Mr. Seiler that I would be happy to pay him a 20 percent restocking fee, but that I *needed* a working board and his wasn't it. He then told me that *Lexicor's* policy was you bought it, it's yours—no returns. He gave me a number of reasons why. Quite a few people, he said, buy this board, decide they don't want a graphics board, and then want their money back. I told him that his board was not compatible with my machine. He replied that that was too bad; he sells boards that are built to Atari's engineering specifications. If the board doesn't work, it's not his fault. *But*, he continued, he would work with me, as long as it took, to get my board to work. He once again promised to send my his set-up of the *NOVA*. He repeatedly asked me what programs were on my root directory or auto folder. I told him there were no such programs, they were all deleted. He repeated this question every five minutes and I repeated my answer. In an unguarded moment he told me that he's not making anything on the boards, he just wants people to buy the new professional 24-bit software that *Lexicor* is releasing, and by selling the boards cheap, he hopes to encourage users. This was a very bizarre conversation. Finally, he suggested I plug my board into the computer *while it was booting*. It was following this advice that I burned out the board and wiped out my so many times reformatted hard drive.

As I sat in front of my computer, dense smoke obscured my vision. I leaped up, ducked my head into a bucket to put out the fire and punished the dog. As it turns out, after reformatting my hard drive, everything worked OK, except that my hard drive would spring to life every 30 seconds and crash my machine. This stopped once I pulled the *NOVA* out of its socket. Before I give my conclusions, I will quote from a letter I received two days later from Mr. Seiler. I should also add that he *did send me his set-up*, but never again will a *NOVA* board find welcome with my machine. Keep in mind the facts I've given in the above story when listening to what Mr. Seiler has to say.

In *Lexicor's* Words

"... If Mr. Sui is unable to provide a satisfactory solution by telephone I would suggest that he will need from you some very specific information in order to determine the next step. He will want an exact copy of your "C" and or "D" root drives including (AUTO folders, any acc's you are running and the various INF and RCS file "in tack" and exactly the way you now have them configured on your system."

Before I give the next extended quote I will mention that he informed me that neither he nor Mr. Sui had my telephone

number. It's quite true that I never gave Mr. Seiler my phone number, but Mr. Sui, as well as calling me twice the previous month, did, indeed, have my telephone number, which I repeatedly left with his mother and his machine. Mr. Seiler continued.

"In closing you mentioned that you thought the basic problem might be an incompatibility between your computer and the card. I am aware that the Atari TT computer as a general class of machines has demonstrated a wide latitude in performance specifications. Lexicor in developing software for the German made "Matrix" card found that fully half of its development TT's were so far out of "Spec" that they had to be returned to Atari computers for repair, this was at Lexicor's expense. To the best of our knowledge this is not an uncommon problem with graphics upgrade cards, and while annoying, the only solution to this situation when it occurs is the machine owner simply has to decide if he/she wants to have their computer repaired or not. Such a situation is entirely a matter between the Computer owner and Atari...."

There were quite a few other odd remarks in this letter. Considering the phone conversation that preceded this letter, I wondered if the two of us lived on the same planet. At any rate, this letter from Mr. Seiler provoked a letter from me, so nasty and insulting that, even if Mr. Seiler was the most professional person in the world, business between him and me, not to mention Mr. Sui, would be impossible. This is because, beneath all the obfuscation, the bottom line is that he sold me a card that *he knew* had only a 50 percent chance of working. Does anyone recall in any of Lexicor's literature a warning about this? On another level, why do both the *Crazy Dots* and *Cyrel* cards work on my machine, without any problems? Could it be that hooking up an IBM graphics card to an Atari interface is just not that hot an idea?

Neither Mr. Seiler nor Mr. Sui are crooks. The revealing letter, I'm quoting from, should confirm this. The fact that he would send such a letter, shows how confused he actually is. They've sunk big bucks into this board and refuse to believe anything bad about it. They've deluded themselves. But who cares about nifty little psychological explanations. They have my money and I've only been able to get one dollar back on an investment that has so far cost me nearly \$800. I should add that Mr. Seiler faxed *my letter* to Mr. Sui. He, in turn, finally got around to sending me the latest version of the *NOVA* software along with a check for \$20. In *his* rather incoherent letter, he accuses me, among other things, of racism. This was probably due to the fact that, in my letter, I used more expletives in describing him than Mr. Seiler. But these insults were quite specific to Mr. Sui, personally, and I retract none of them. If by some chance I write to Mr. Seiler in the future, I will be sure to keep my expletives more evenly divided.

Before summarizing this board, I will add that both *Gribnif Software* and *DMC* report a zero failure rate of their boards. It's true that *some* of their boards were defective, but the replacements that they shipped worked fine. Both companies will refund your money in the event that such a problem occurs and both companies never heard of someone who spent big bucks on a graphic board just to see how it worked.

I've had a lot of experience with *DMC* and can report that I've *always received swift, competent support*. I've only owned two products from *Gribnif*. *Convector Professional*, for which I needed no support and *Arabesque Professional*. *Arabesque* had one minor bug. I made the mistake of calling *Gribnif* for support. For weeks afterward they hounded me with phone calls and messages, trying to get to the bottom of this. This was such a minor bug, that I finally told them it was fixed, just to get them to stop calling me. But the support I received from *Lexicor* was either relatively fast and incompetent or slow to non-existent. I am trying to run a business; the *NOVA* card represents a major upgrade. *Lexicor* is selling hardware and professional level software. Could their business survive if I removed their computers for two months? In effect, Mr. Seiler, in telling me that he will continue to "give me support," is telling me nonsense. Apparently, he thinks I have nothing better to do than be a beta tester for him, and at the same time pay for the privilege. Think about it. Here is a developer selling *business software* and providing the type of support needed to run *Neochrome*. Getting rid of the *NOVA* allowed me to go back to work. During this entire period, I didn't have a working computer. His letter ended with the following.

"Lexicor will make every reasonable effort to provide the best possible service and support it can. Lexicor has already demonstrated this by replacing the *NOVA* board you purchased at your request at no cost to you. We hope that we will be able to resolve your compatibility concerns about your brand new replacement unit."

Obviously, this article is not going to recommend the *NOVA* card. If you own a TT, by *Lexicor's* own admission, you have only a 50 percent chance of getting it to run. I suspect that *Mega STe* and *Mega* users will not have the same compatibility problems as TT owners. Even so, do you really want a large black box dangling out of your computer by a ribbon cable? I've managed to master the *VMG* program, which creates usable resolutions. For a simple program, it wasn't easy to learn. I won't give a compatibility list. Since my board would not run properly, such a list will be misleading. But for other reasons, I will definitely say, that *Outline 111* will not run on this board. If you're going to spend almost \$600 on such a board, then spend a little more and purchase the new 24-bit *Crazy Dots* board. This board lists for \$800, and you will be able to get it cheaper from retailers. If you want the very best, then buy the *Cyrel* card, which lists for \$1,000. Among other things, this board will allow you to run graphics tablets, serial mouses and other nifty extras from the outside world. A graphic board is a serious investment; never buy such an item from people who use the expression "buyer beware."

A fair warning should be tossed in here. Even the *Cyrel* card is no where near as compatible as it's cracked up to be. Not to be mistaken, I am happy with my purchase. Some time in the next few months I will be reviewing this solid piece of hardware. I am going to try to get *Gribnif* to loan me a board so that users can get a user's perspective on just what graphics cards can do. Until next month.

TOAD

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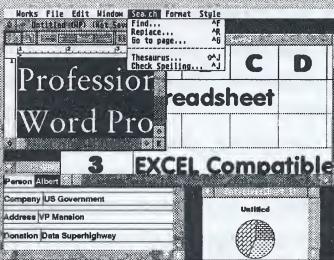
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GENEVA & MultiTOS: Multitasking, But How?

THE ATARI ST OS

GEMDOS: Handles files and basic input-output functions.

AES: Handles GEM interface (windows, dialogs, desk accessories, and program administration).

Other Components: VDI, XBIOS, GDOS, BIOS, GEM, Desktop Program.

NeoDesk 3

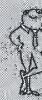
NeoDesk 3 is a replacement desktop program that adds many new features, without the need to upgrade your TOS ROMs to 2.06! It's easy to install and use. And for a limited time, we have a superdeal on NeoDesk! Pay just \$39.95, or just \$30 when you buy Geneva! What a deal!

Geneva: A Multitasking AES

Geneva allows your Atari to do quick, compatible multitasking. A lot of people are still unclear as to what it is, though. Well, look at the description of the ST operating system to your left. Geneva is a replacement AES. This means that the GEM interface under Geneva is completely revamped, with 3D Windows-like features, and it also allows programs to multitask! Unlike MultiTOS, Geneva does not replace GEMDOS, so multitasking with Geneva is quite fast!

MultiTOS: Multitasking AES & GEMDOS

MultiTOS is a pre-emptive multitasking OS that replaces both the AES and GEMDOS, allowing for more extensive background operation than Geneva. However, it is somewhat slower than Geneva. MultiTOS can, however, be used with Geneva (instead of the MultiTOS AES) for full pre-emptive capability!



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MultiTOS: Just \$54.95!
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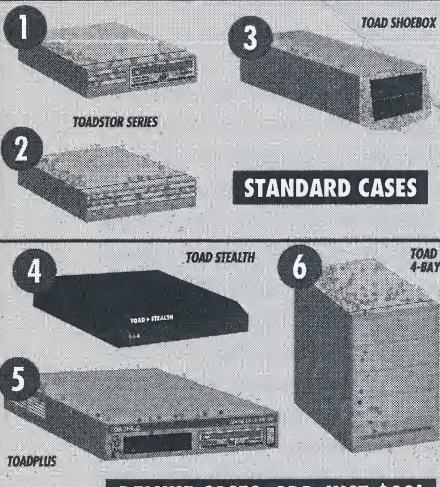
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8 Bit Tidbits

by Rick Reaser

Starting Year Number Three

6 February '94

It's hard to believe, but this is my 21st column of *Current Notes*. In my first two years at *CN*, I've edited about 60 articles, most of which I've had to solicit. As I've said before, finding people to write interesting pieces for you is the most challenging part of the job. I don't get a lot of feedback on what's a hit and what's a miss, so maybe during year three, you will let me know. I plan to keep pretty much the same course as in the past. I'll continue to target for four 8-bit specific articles each issue. When new things come out, we'll try to get reviews published quickly. I plan to keep my own monthly column fairly newsy. Primary emphasis will remain on stories that show you how to get more from your computer.

Some of you are probably wondering how we fared during the recent series of earthquakes here in Southern California. Well, one photo fell off the fireplace mantle and the glass broke. That was about it. The tremors were "old hat" for my sturdily built Atari 8-bit equipment. My set-up has received much more shaking, rattling and rolling during all the cross country moves. Several people at work had severe damage to their homes, but the Air Force Base and the surrounding neighborhood where I live is intact.

As for my job, several attempts are being made to resurrect the program from the dead and we'll see how that goes. You know it's nigh to impossible to kill a big defense program. In the meantime, I've been working on several office automation projects with the PCs at work.

Our program office has a very large Novell Local Area Network with lots of IBM PC clones. Everything is pretty much Windows-based. We have full Internet access to boot. Our goal is to evolve to a paperless office. The project I'm working on is to automate our budget building and execution process. It's pretty neat. Thank goodness I know a little bit about computers. All of our budgets are done on Excel spreadsheets which can be imported into overhead transparencies or word processed documents. Most of the time we use TV projectors and skip the plastic transparencies. For most things, everyone has access to them on the computer. Best of all, I can call the work computer from home and access certain things with my 130XE, if I need to. The Information Super Highway rolls on.

Elsewhere in This Issue

We have a winner for one of my "contests." We have a female 8-bit writer this month. Her name is Margo Sullivan and I met her on the Information Highway known as CompuServe. Margo shares some of her insights into local access TV programming with us this month with an 8-bit twist. Margo majored in creative-writing at Barnard College, went all the way through school in the pre-computer age, and can remember 1K computers. She won a nomination from the RI Public Utilities Commission (a.k.a the prestigious Puke award) for scenes from her play "The Waitress's Nightmare," which were produced for public access in Providence. We hope to hear more from Margo in the future.

Tom Andrews joins us again this month with a recap of the more sophisticated graphics programs for our Atari Classics. Then he gives us a preview of the not yet released *JVIEWXL* by Jeff Potter.

As a special treat, we have two short pieces on the latest rave for 8-bit gamers, *Maze of AGDAgon*. Our *CARDSTAX* Canadian, Dave Paterson, gives a first-hand report on a three-person battle extraordinaire. In addition, program co-author, Chuck Steinman, gives us the inside story on how this programming feat was accomplished.

Writers Still Needed!

I actually have an extra article or two that I am saving for next month. Since faithful Frank Walters had two articles last month, I'm saving his latest *TextPRO* hints for next month. Other than that, I have a few vague promises and sketchy leads. That means, I still need you to help me out with your creative writing skills and experiences. Let me know if you are willing.

Prism Studio: GenLocking your 8-Bit

I picked this up on GEnie. *TransKey* godfather, Michael St. Pierre, has developed a new product for your Atari Classic, *Prism Studio*. It offers full color video overlay for only \$219. 8-bit genlocking has never been so easy (or available before).

So, what is *Prism Studio*? It is a piece of hardware that, when connected to your Atari 8-bit, provides a means for combining the video created on your computer, with video from an external source (e.g. a video camera). This merging of images is commonly called video overlay or genlocking

(meaning to generate a computer clock source that is locked to external video). The process by which this is done can be quite tricky, particularly when color is to be overlayed (luminance only overlay is considerably easier).

Michael began experiments approximately two years ago to allow the Atari 8-bit computer to be genlocked. This early attempt was put into the Public Domain. For further information on this, see the *San Leandro Computer Club (SLCC) Journal*, November 1991. This first prototype was only capable of luminance overlay, and suffered some synchronization problems relating to SIO access of any kind, resulting in system lock-up.

Well, after two years, Michael is back, this time with a full color video overlay product, *Prism Studio*, and a new company to support it, MYTEK. *Prism Studio* provides a means by which you can take virtually any color, generated in any graphics mode, and overlay it with an external video source. Priority can be adjusted by both a fader control and a fade vs. luminance selector. Genlocking is done entirely in hardware, remaining virtually transparent to the operation of your computer, and will not cause any system crashes to occur. For more information, check out Category 5, Topic 7 in the Atari 8-bit RoundTable on GEnie.

Fine Tooned Engineering (FTe) Update

Mike Hohman of FTe is now on GEnie. He has his own area on the service, Category 5, Topic 3. If you have any questions or requests, this is a good place to catch what's happening. Mike has been looking for ideas on how to improve the ICD/OSS line and for areas of specific interest.

FTe is continuing to get its house in order so that items are available when customers request them. FTe is also working on some new 8-bit products that will be announced soon and are guaranteed to knock your socks off. Hopefully, we'll have more word on this next month.

GEnie News

Jeff Williams (ALFRED) is up to beta copy version 3.5 of his *Djinni* program. (*Djinni* is an Aladdin-like front end for the Atari 8-bit.) The testers are having a ball with it, while Jeff smashes all the bugs out. It's a pretty neat program and everyone can't wait until it is finished.

In case you weren't aware of this, it's possible to logon to GEnie with a single line and move directly to the page you want to by simply hitting [RETURN] after the initial menu appears. Here's how to do it.

Let's say my:

User ID = r.reaserjr1
Password = atari8bit

and I want to go directly to Page 200, mail, in the "mail command mode," which is selection 9 on Page 200 menu after I logon.

At the U# prompt I would send the information in the following format:

r.reaserjr1,atari8bit,200;9

The idea is to program this into your *Express! Cartridge Logon* or into *BobTerm* as a logon script.

Note that the ";" menu item number routine works elsewhere on GEnie. When I get done with mail, I merely type "m 665;1" to get into the Atari8 bulletin board.

CompuServe News

Interestingly, most of the banter in the AtariGaming Forum on CIS has been on Political Correctness and use of non-gender specific pronouns and such. ST, Lynx, Jaguar and 8-bit owners have been mixing it up in the Community Square lately.

BTW, it's also possible to logon to CIS with a single line and go directly to a Forum as it is with GEnie. It's actually a little slicker than on GEnie. Here's how to do it.

Let's say my:

User ID = 72130,2073
Password = ATARI+8BIT

and I want to go directly to MAIL when I logon.

At the User ID: prompt I would send the information in the following format:

72130,2073/go:mail\ATARI+8BIT

In a flash, I'm at the MAIL menu, bypassing the normal initial screen. Note that you completely skip the password prompt when you use this approach. Of course, you can program this script into your *Express! Cartridge Logon* or into *BobTerm*. It's really neat and I do it all the time.

Tyne and Wear Atari User Group (TWAUG)

I got a nice package from the David Ewens of TWAUG in January. He sent me a copy of their latest programming endeavor, *UltiFont*, which is a character set editor. I'm looking for a reviewer for the program and, hopefully, I'll find one and have a review for the next issue of *CN*.

David was quick to point out in his letter, at the recent All Micro Computer Show in Stafford, England there were 12 8-bit booths and only one ST booth. There were even 8-bit vendors present from Holland and Germany. What an interesting turn of events.

David also sent me some excerpts from a new book that TWAUG is working on. It is a complete update to "Mapping the Atari." Instead of just an appendix for 130XEs, it will be baselined to cover that platform. The book will also correct numerous errors in Ian Chadwick's original work. The finished product is expected to sell for 12.95 pounds sterling plus postage and will run about 400 pages. If I get permission, I plan to run an extract of the book in the next issue of *Current Notes* to whet your appetite. Right now, TWAUG is taking an interest count to get an idea of how many books to print. If you are interested, send them a note at: TWAUG, P.O. Box 8, Wallsend Tyne & Wear, United Kingdom NE28 6DQ.

KE-SOFT

Included with the latest issue (Jan/Feb '94) of the TWAUG Newsletter was an 8-page insert from KE-SOFT, auf Englisch, packed with tons of interesting European titles. The best part was that KE-SOFT takes MasterCard and the catalog had prices in US dollars as well as Deutsche Marks. This means that anyone here in the states with the proper plastic, can order some of these great European products as easy as pie. There was even a pre-addressed envelope in the insert. My eyes are still watering. For more information, please write:

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Information SuperHighway Stuff

There were two articles in the Dec '93 Roundel magazine, a rag for BMW enthusiasts, that dealt with the Info Highway. One of the articles was entitled, "A Trip to the Cyberbahn." (BMW owners long for the day to drive unimpeded on the German autobahn.) The other article spoke as to how racing information could be readily found on CompuServe.

The first article spoke of how BMW owners have their own piece of the Internet now. Richard Welty maintains a list of BMW owners with Internet accounts and runs a small newsgroup. You can get on the list by sending a message to bmw-request@balltown.cma.com.

The author of the second article, John Speer, is involved with the CompuServe Motor Sports Forum. His User ID is 73047,3145. John is trying to see if there is interest in forming a separate BMW forum for BMW owners.

There were also a few interesting notes in the January issue of ASMENEWS (the American Society of Mechanical Engineers paper). The Society is completing a business plan that will provide members with interactive electronic network service by the end of the year via the Internet via local phone call. This will include access to ASME's extensive software library as well as e-mail. The same issue of ASMENEWS, told how ASME members can now search through 250 National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) research projects via the Internet using a utility called "gopher."

So what does this have to do with Atari 8-bits? The point is that people are now really using their computers to talk with others on subjects other than computers. I was surprised to see these articles in a car magazine. The point is that you can use your Atari 8-bit to communicate on the Information SuperHighway regarding just about any subject imaginable, from mechanical engineering to BMWs. So get out there and take a spin with your 8-bit.

Hard Drive Tragedy Averted Once Again!

As I was getting ready to ARC this column and send it to our publisher, Joe Waters, this month, I did a dumb thing. I reversed the destination ARC file name with the name of this

file. That means I lost the sector map for this file. Fortunately, I had a hard copy of the column, but I didn't want to retype the whole thing. Using DISKRX, I was able to recover all but the first sector, without retying. Here's how I did it, in case you ever do something stupid like this.

I first found the first sector of the new file, which only had one sector. This was the old first sector of my original column. The way SpartaDOS operates, all the succeeding sectors of the column would be after this sector. So I then used the Search ATASCII feature to find a word that would be in the next (second) sector. When I got to that sector, I used the option where you can mark individual sectors and send them to a new file with the space bar. I marked that sector and read forward a sector at a time until the column words didn't appear, marking sectors as I went. I then used the Search ATASCII feature to find a word in the next sector. The bottom line is that you can use the Search ATASCII feature in the middle of marking individual sectors. Anyway, it went fairly fast. I was really amazed at how fragmented my hard drive was.

That's all for now. You can contact me via the snail mail or e-mail addresses at the front of the magazine.

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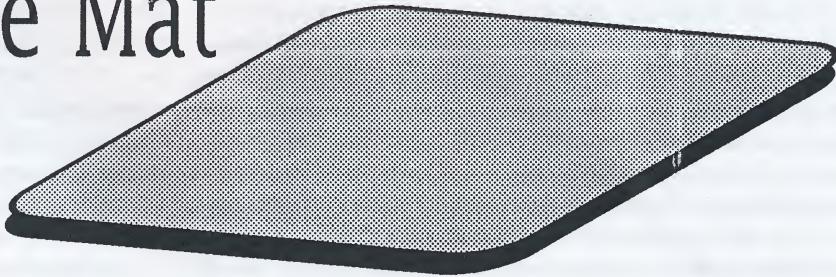
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Advanced 8-bit Graphics Systems

You Won't Believe Your Eyes

by Thomas J. Andrews

GENie: J.ANDREWS24

Computer graphics have come a long way since the Atari 8-bit was first designed. While the 8-bit has long been able to handle text from any computer, it's been unable to display graphics from such platforms as ST, Amiga, and VGA. That is, not until recently.

Some time ago, the folks at CompuServe saw the desirability of being able to transfer graphics from one platform to another, so they developed and copyrighted GIF, or Graphics Interchange Format. This hardware-independent format is an adaptation of the same algorithm used by ARC/UNARC programs. Theoretically, all a user needs is a decoder to translate and display graphics from this format, no matter what computer they were created on, or which one he uses.

In practice, it's not that simple. The ST, Amiga, and other systems have higher resolutions and can display more colors at one time than the 8-bit. So, while an 8-bit could decode a GIF file, displaying it is another matter entirely.

We Can So Do It!

These obstacles, though, are not insurmountable. Through the use of pixel averaging techniques, high resolution pictures can be reduced in resolution to something the 8-bit can display and still be recognizable. Several techniques using the properties of the 8-bit OS and taking advantage of persistence of vision in the human eye can effectively display more colors than the official 8-bit specifications would indicate.

One of the earliest attempts at a GIF decoder was *ATVIEW8* by Dan Davis. This program decoded into a GR. 15 screen with four colors.

APAC (Any Point, Any Color) was described in *Analog Computing* #60 (May 1988) by Thomas Tanida. With this method, scan lines of Graphics 11 (16 colors, 1 luminance) alternate with Graphics 9 (1 color, 16 luminances) scan lines on the screen. From a distance, these lines blend together and can produce a total of 256 colors. The resolution for this method is 80H (horizontal) by 96V (vertical) pixels per screen.

Interlaced APAC (.ILC) was introduced by Charles Blaquier and refined somewhat by Jeff Potter of Port Orange, Florida. This technique uses page flipping to interlace two APAC screens. This increases the resolution to 80H by 192V and eliminates distracting black lines that appear in APAC graphics. It also can produce 256 colors.

PRYZM (.PZM) was developed by Daryll Yong. This method page flips between two screens, one in Graphics 9, the other in Graphics 11. No interlacing is involved. PRYZM

produces the same 256 colors and 80 by 192 resolution as Interlaced APAC.

COLRVIEW, another method developed by Jeff Potter, uses a principle borrowed from color television. On a color TV screen, each pixel is made up of three components—one red, one green, and one blue. All colors are produced by varying the intensities of these components. These component pixels are so small that our eyes blend them together from any appreciable distance.

COLRVIEW uses a somewhat similar approach. Three component screens are placed in RAM, one each in red, green, and blue. On the first display scan, the first line is from the red component, the second from the green, the third from the blue, the fourth from the red again, and so on for the entire screen. On the second scan, the first line is from the green component, the second from the blue, and the third from the red. On the third scan, the first is blue, the next is red, the next is green, and, well, you get the picture.

All this scan line manipulation requires extensive use of Display List Interrupts (DLI's), Vertical Blank Interrupts (VBI's), and page flipping to accomplish its task, so it uses lots of RAM. This method currently supports Graphics 15 resolution (160 by 192), where it can produce 64 colors, and Graphics 9 (80 by 192), where it can produce a whopping 4096 colors.

OK, Are There Some Programs For This?

So how is an 8-bit user to use these techniques? Well, we're in luck. Jeff Potter (funny how that name keeps coming up, isn't it?) has written a series of Shareware programs for this very purpose.

The anchor of the series is *APACVIEW 2.4*. This program will decode GIF files and display the graphics directly in APAC mode. It can also decode GIF files into PRYZM, ILC, Gr.9, Gr.11, and COLRVIEW formats. APAC, PRYZM, and ILC pictures can be loaded and displayed by *APACVIEW*. The COLRVIEW system requires too much RAM for a viewer to coexist with a GIF decoder in a 48K Atari, so that has to go into a separate program. A special "joystick mode" allows the user to zero in on a section of the graphic, then reload that section enlarged to fill the screen.

COLRVIEW files can be viewed with *COLRVIEW 2.6*. This program not only displays the graphics; it allows the user to "tune" the balance and intensity of the individual color components. It also includes a "slide show" mode, where several graphics can be shown in succession.

APACSHOW is a slide show program for APAC files, and includes a random pixel dissolve between images.

DEGASRD translates and displays *DEGAS* and *DEGAS ELITE* files in COLRVIEW formats. *DEGAS* is an ST drawing program that produces pictures in three different resolutions, two color and one monochrome. *DEGAS* has its own compression format, and *DEGASRD* will convert either the compressed or uncompressed files. It also has a slide show feature and color tuning capability.

ILBMREAD views Amiga IFF pictures in APAC mode, and has a joystick mode similar to the one in *APACVIEW*.

For you 8-bit artists out there, *GIFNCODE* will convert *MicroPainter*, *Micro Illustrator*, Graphics 8, and Graphics 9 pictures into GIF format, so you can exchange them with owners of other computer platforms.

So, Do They Work?

I have used *APACVIEW* 2.4, *COLRVIEW* 2.6, and *DEGASRD*, trying out the different display options, and I found significant differences. I don't have a color monitor at the present time, but I do have easy access to two very different TV sets. One is a 14-year-old Zenith 21", and the other is an even older 13" Panasonic using vacuum tubes. (My mother won't allow a computer in the same ROOM with her new monitor/receiver. *SIGH*)

At my request, ACE of Syracuse Backstairs BBS (315-458-0118) Sysop, Ken Wickert, uploaded several GIF files to the 8-bit Graphics file SIG. *APACVIEW* reports the resolution and number of colors in a file before it converts it, and it reported various resolutions for the files at 256 colors each. Using a combination of *APACVIEW* and *COLRVIEW*, I converted and viewed each file in each 8-bit format.

All of the display techniques seem to be very display hardware-dependent. For APAC and ILC especially, the color intensity must be turned up higher than normal. With my equipment, the Panasonic could be turned up higher than the Zenith. According to the program docs, this is common among different monitors, too. Jeff Potter recommends that on monitors with separate luma and chroma input options, the composite input should be used instead for best results with APAC.

The least desirable display turned out to be PRYZM mode, mostly because it had the highest amount of image flicker. While there is a certain amount of flicker in all these methods, with all but PRYZM it could be reduced to barely noticeable levels by careful adjustment of the TV set. Results might be different with different hardware.

The APAC and ILC formats had less flicker, but had washed-out colors on the Zenith. On the Panasonic, I had better color intensity, but when I attempted to adjust the colors with the tint control, some would appear correct when others didn't. No matter how I adjusted, I couldn't seem to get all the colors to look like they were correct at the same time. I believe this is because while APAC and the pictures each have 256-color palettes, they don't necessarily use the SAME 256

colors. Later information from Jeff Potter indicated that this was, indeed, the case. Jeff also indicated that monitors with comb filters seem to have the best APAC and ILC displays. Neither of these TVs has a comb filter.

COLRVIEW was a different story. Using the Graphics 9 resolution, with its 4096 possible colors, I saw graphics displays I never thought I'd see produced with an 8-bit. While the results of the pixel averaging and lower resolution are certainly noticeable, from a short distance, the more subtle color shadings give at least the illusion of fine detail. *COLRVIEW* displays had the best quality, by far, of any of these techniques, on BOTH televisions. The Graphics 9 resolution was generally best for digital photos, while Graphics 15 seemed best for cartoon and line drawings. Color balance and "correctness" were excellent.

Program operations are simple and straightforward, with one-key commands used wherever possible. Commands common to all members of the series used the same keystrokes, making it easier to go from one program to the other. I found no obvious operational bugs.

Can They Get Even Better?

I do have a couple of suggestions for future versions of *APACVIEW*. First, converting a GIF file for *COLRVIEW* is a multi-stage process requiring several commands. It would be easy for a user to mess up the sequence and not notice it until finished, thus wasting several minutes of effort. If a new command could be added to automate the procedure, it would be a significant improvement.

Secondly, I was using DOS 2.5 on a 256K RAMBO-enhanced 800XL, with Tim Patrick's SmartRAM 1050 emulator (ANTIC 9/89). Converting a GIF file from the RAMdisk cuts the required time about in half. This is especially helpful in the multi-stage *COLRVIEW* conversion. The user can choose to display the graphic as it is converted, a sometimes fascinating thing to watch. Unfortunately, *APACVIEW*'s screen memory resides within the 16K bank switching window of the XL. This means that with a RAMBO enhancement, as the RAMdisk is accessed, the contents of the particular bank switched in are flashed on the screen as if they were part of the display. While this doesn't really hurt anything, visually it can be quite annoying. Moving the screen memory to a location outside the bank switching window would cure the problem.

I have some ideas for programs I'd like to see added to the series. I'd like to see a program or programs that would convert other ST and Amiga formats to *COLRVIEW*. I also think it would be great to have programs that would translate from GIF, ST, and Amiga formats directly to a monochrome and/or color printer, keeping as much resolution as possible.

Is That All There Is?

Most of the above text was written early in 1993, for publication at that time. For various reasons which are unimportant here, it was never published. Since that time a lot has been happening on the *COLRVIEW* front.

Saving a picture with the original *COLRVIEW* system requires three separate 62-sector disk files, one for each component screen. In addition, there is no identification as to the graphics mode of the picture, either 9 or 15. That had to be set by the user at display time. In March 1993, Earl Halliwell developed the *COLRVIEWSquash* system. This system takes the three *COLRVIEW* files and, using a method developed from the *Micro Illustrator* compression format, combines and compresses the component files into one compact file, labeled with the .RGB extender. Graphics mode information is included in the file, as is a short display caption. A companion program, *Colr/Squash/View*, is used to display the pictures, either individually or as a slide show.

These programs are easy to use, and work very well. Surprisingly, I noticed little time difference between the loading and decoding of a RGB file and that of a regular *COLRVIEW* file triad. The displays are reproduced faithfully, and the RGB files take up a lot less space. The only problem I found was that *ColrSquashView* is completely incompatible with *Turbo Basic XL*.

Sometime in early Spring, a new *COLRVIEW* mode was developed in Graphics 8 resolution. I don't know who gets the credit for the original idea. Jeff and Earl say that it just seemed to develop naturally. This mode gives 320 by 192 resolution, but only 8 colors. Still, that's several more than we had in Graphics 8 before.

Due to the widespread recognition and interest that *COLRVIEW* began to generate, GENie 8-bit SYSOP, Craig S. Thom, created a special sub-library of files for *COLRVIEW* pictures and utilities. Most, if not all, pictures that had already been uploaded were converted to the compressed RGB format. *COLRVIEW* has become a regular topic of discussion, both in the GENie Atari8 BBS messages and at the weekly Real Time Conferences, where it is regularly referred to as CV.

A New Star Is Rising

Jeff is hard at work on the next logical member of his program series, which he tentatively calls *JVIEW XL*. What does this program do? Why, that should be obvious. *JVIEW XL* decodes GIF files into *COLRVIEW* format. *JVIEW XL* is in the beta test stage, and I have been privileged to be selected as one of Jeff's beta testers. Consequently, I can give you a preliminary idea of what the program can do.

JVIEW requires an XL/XE with at least 64k of RAM. As I said before, a *COLRVIEW* display and a GIF decoder cannot co-exist in a 48k machine, so *JVIEW* makes use of the 16k of RAM beneath the OS. At present, it has been debugged for use with MYDOS only. It seems to work just fine with DOS 2.5, but won't work with SpartaDOS.

The command structure is similar to the other programs in the -VIEW series, but some new commands have been added. A single command now decodes GIF's into CV format. The display problem I had when decoding from a RAMdisk with *APACVIEW* has been corrected, and it's now a joy to watch. If you're in a hurry, you can still blank out the

screen to increase decoding speed by about 30%. You can even toggle the display in and out to check on the decoding progress. *JVIEW* also has a "joystick mode," similar to that for *APACVIEW*.

But Wait, There's More

If GIF-to-CV decoding were all that *JVIEW* does, it would be a valuable addition to the 8-bit software base—but that isn't all it does. For the first time, as far as I know, DITHERING is introduced to the 8-bit. Now, I don't pretend to know much about what dithering really is, so I can't explain much about it. I do know from reading David Barkin's *Running Out of RAM* column here in *CN* that it is used extensively in computer photographic manipulation and enhancement.

What it *seems* to do for CV pictures is to add more intensities and colors to the display. Jeff tells me that the extra colors are only simulated, but my eyes can't tell the difference, especially at a distance. Digital photos, which previously had to be done in CV9 to look best, now frequently look better in CV15. Dithered CV15 displays are sharper and more focused-appearing than non-dithered CV9 displays. *JVIEW* has four dither settings, two specifically designed for CV9 and CV15, one for CV8, and one for all three. Non-dithering is also available.

Decoded color images may be saved in either CV three-file format or CVSquash compressed RGB format. Most importantly, the effects of the dithering are passed along into the saved files, so they do appear when displayed with the various slide show programs. You can also decode into Graphics 8, 9, or 15 monochrome displays, which can then be saved into single 62-sector files for use with other programs.

A couple of things about *JVIEW* surprised me. First, the decoding process into CV isn't significantly longer than that for APAC. Second, using the various dithering modes added no time to the decoding, at least according to my digital wrist watch. The RAMdisk advantage isn't as pronounced as it is with *APACVIEW*, 30% as opposed to 50%, but it's still significant.

When Can We Get *JVIEW XL*?

Jeff is adamant about not announcing a release date for *JVIEW*. Unlike Atari, he doesn't want to make a promise he might not be able to keep. Right now, he's digesting the reports and suggestions of his beta testers, trying to decide if any changes should be made. I won't mention the other features under consideration, since they may not make it into the final version. Just as it is, *JVIEW* is a great program, and I eagerly await its first public release. Jeff does say it should be soon.

In the meantime, you can get an idea of *JVIEW*'s abilities by downloading some of the CV picture files from GENie and Compuserve. Several of these files have been uploaded by Jeff and his beta testers. Most are in RGB format, so you'll need

(Continued on page 41.)

The Making of Maze of AGDAgon

by Chuck Steinman, DataQue Products

GENie: DATAQUE.1

The recently released multi-computer, multi-player video game called *Maze of AGDAgon* (*MoA*) has been in development for over three years. What began as a simple exercise in inter-computer communications, now is a full-featured game.

Several years ago, I released a simple Tic-Tac-Toe game that used the joystick ports to connect two Atari 8-bit systems together. The game, called *Tic-Tac-Two*, used what I designated as the GameLink protocol to allow the game status to be shared between the two computers. The slow speed and massive software overhead of this networking scheme lead to the development of the GameLinkII system.

GameLinkII would use the SIO port on all 8-bit systems to connect several Atari computers together. Since this port is interrupt driven by a UART in PoKey, it worked out much better. Another great benefit was that it would allow the program to be downloaded from the master computer to each slave. Now only one copy of the software on disk or cartridge would be needed for all players.

Now that a better network had been designed, it was time to develop an application that would use it. I decided that the monumental task of developing a multi-player game would require too much effort for one person, so I started cornering people who I thought would help out.

Jeff Potter was one of the early favorites, due to his great experience with bitmapped graphics (*COLORVIEW*, *APACVIEW*), and his recently released game (*CRABNEBULA*). I wanted this game to have outstanding graphics, but within the limits of memory and available processor time. This would require on-the-fly decoding of compressed image data. Jeff accepted the challenge, and we began to start coding this monster in early 1991.

Shortly after we started, it still looked like we might need more help. Since we both had GENie accounts, it was decided that we would form an area there to collect ideas and people. The group was called AGDA (Atari Game Developer's Association), with the area on GENie as our development arena. We picked up several people who served as both idea generators and also beta testers.

After several months rolled by, I contacted Jeff Casbeer, hoping that he would join the group. I had downloaded a game called *CARNY*, which he had written, that I thought had been done well. He indicated that he would help out on a limited basis, so he designed the sound effects engine for the *Maze of AGDAgon*. There were quite a few restrictions placed on Jeff C. while writing the sound engine, since we wanted to keep all the code fully transportable. Several weeks later, the sound effects files were done.

Over the next few years, the game was enhanced, defined, aligned and modified numerous times. The network

and graphics were tweaked until it seemed we were about tweaked out! There were several stubborn little quirks that took quite a bit of time to iron out. Jeff Potter had the patience to work them out, though. By the end of 1993, it looked like things were finally coming together.

One of the big problems we had while developing *AGDAgon* was that all of us were using different software development packages. Each time we made changes to the code, we had to send it to the other programmers, who had to re-format it. Jeff Potter and I probably moved the complete source code package between us at least a half-dozen times. Each time, it had to be converted to the format used by the next programmer. This is not a small list either; currently, there are three dozen source files, which produce a list file of over 350K bytes.

But, all the work was worth it. We now have released 1.0 distributed though shareware, with posts on both GENie and Compuserve. Hopefully, from there the file has expanded to bulletin boards; and club libraries have added *AGDAgon* to their list of files. Now, the cartridge version has just been finalized, and GameLinkII cables are available, as well.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Advanced 8-Bit Graphics

(Continued from page 40.)

Earl Halliwell's *CVSquash* program package to view them. All of the other programs I've mentioned here can be found in the GENie and Compuserve libraries, as well as from other shareware sources. Hundreds of GIF files can be found scattered all over GENie and CIS.

Any Questions?

If you have any questions for Jeff Potter or Earl Halliwell, you can contact them on GENie. Jeff's GENie address is **JDPOTTER**, and Earl's is **E.HALLIWELL**. You can also find Jeff on Compuserve at 74030,2020. Both are very active in the 8-bit community, and regularly attend the GENie Real Time Conferences (Thursdays, 10:00 pm Eastern time.) Jeff also frequents the Compuserve Conference (Sundays, 9:00 pm Eastern time).

These advanced graphics programs expand the capabilities of the 8-bit into areas that wouldn't have been dreamed of just a few years ago. Programmers like Jeff Potter and Earl Halliwell need our support and encouragement to continue this type of expansion. Please help give it to them.



Maze of AGDAgon

An A-Maze-ing New Game for the Atari 8-bit

Review by David A. Paterson

GENie: D.PATERSON2

Most of my friends have gone beyond 8-bit computer systems. They brag about their 486/33s with SVGA and 8 megs of RAM, and show off the games they have that take advantage of that hardware. But whenever it comes down to multi-player games, my collection of old, reliable Atari 8-bits takes the day. Usually, we dust off my 800 and play *Ali Baba* or *Asteroids* or *BallBlazer*, and there's always *MULE* if we really want to get violent. (*MULE* playing tip: If you sit on top of another player, he can't do anything in the auction.) Now, my friends and I have another multi-player game to play: *Maze of AGDAgon* (*MoA*).

An in-GENie-ous Idea

MoA started out on GENie when people began discussing Atari's ill-fated *MidiMaze* for the 8-bit. A small crew of dedicated Atarians decided to make it a reality and dubbed themselves the AGDA group, for Atari Game Developers Association. J.D. Potter, best known for the *APACView* and *ColorView* programs, and Chuck Steinman of DataQue were the driving forces that brought this project together. Their effort was truly a labor of love, and deserves our support. [Editor's Note: See Chuck Steinman's "The Making of MoA," in this issue for more on this. -RR]

MoA is unique in that every player requires his own computer and monitor. One computer, called the Host, loads the program from disk (though a cartridge version is available now). Everyone else hooks his computer up to the first one using a special serial cable called the GameLink II. As each

other person turns on his computer, the program loads from the host. These cables can be built by the "do-it-yourselfer" or purchased from DataQue/Lex-Tronics (see ordering information at the end of this review). To test out the program, there are even instructions available to build a "temporary" cable by sticking paper clips into the ends of two standard SIO cables!?! The GameLink II architecture supports up to eight users, including the host.

Okay, Let's Play

MoA is a first-person perspective maze game. Each player sees the maze in front of him on his screen. Above the maze are the vital statistics of any game: time, score, bombs, lives, location and direction. Players stalk the maze looking for each other, firing bombs at each other when spotted. Shouts and moans sound around the room as people maneuver each other into corners and fire away. More devious players let their opponents destroy each other, then take control. Each person begins with three lives. Once killed three times, players become ghosts, able to wander the maze but unable to affect anything, making *MoA* the first game I know of with an afterlife.

Players can carry up to three bombs. Supplies can be replenished by the round white bombs scattered at random in the maze. Bombs have a limited lifespan; after about 30 seconds you'll hear a warning tone and then they'll disappear. Once fired, bombs give off a warbling warning tone; if you hear an incoming bomb there's just enough time to run for it. Bombs

are directional, and will destroy everything straight ahead of them.

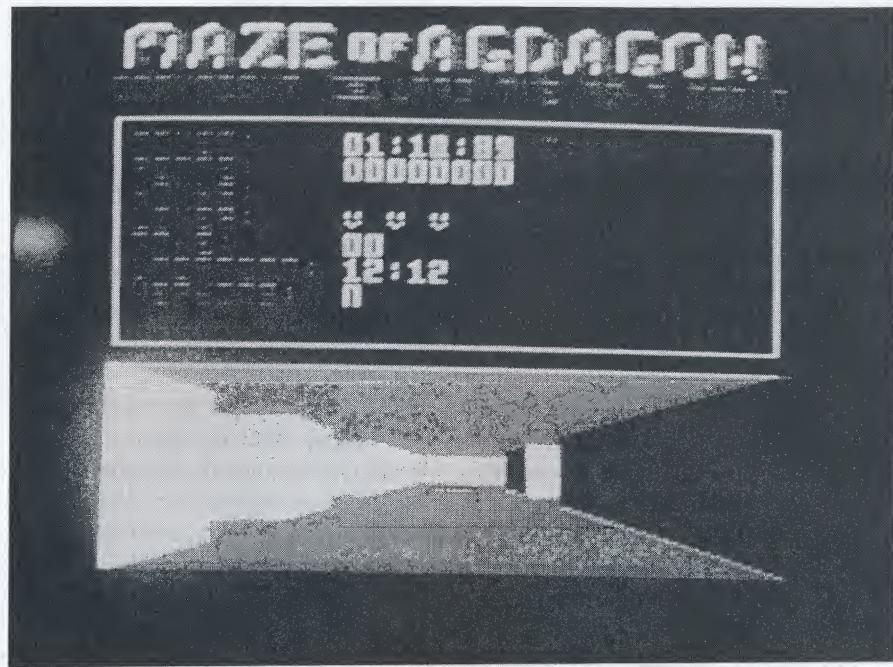
Bombs have one other use besides getting rid of the competition. Pulling back on the joystick shows a map of the maze. If you press the fire button while looking at this map and have at least two bombs, the current positions of all your enemies will be revealed. This glimpse will cost you two bombs from your limited supply, so it's best to be prudent.

With Friends Like These...

For my big playtest session, I set up two TVs and a monochrome monitor with an 800, a 130xe and an XEGS. My homebred GameLink II cable was met with frustration by one friend. "If I want to play multi-player games on my PC, I'd have to pay hundreds of dollars for network cards. And you're telling me that that mishmash of parts will do the same?" he whined. (So, I'm not so handy with a soldering iron, OK?)

The actual display for *MoA* is fairly simple. The maze walls are in three colors, giving a visual indication of your direction. The other players are round red faces with a crooked sort of grin. Extra bombs are white balls hanging in mid-air. Cunning *MoA* players lurk behind the bombs, luring others in to pick up the bombs, then attacking. Of course, your bombs usually choose to decay right about then.

Playing the game is fun. My friends and I yelled, hollered and moaned when things went against us. One friend, whenever killed out, would start running around the maze as a ghost, looking for me then calling out his own co-ordinates, letting my other friend



hunt me down. You have to be careful when you set up your playing area—if the monitors are too close together it can be really tempting to look at your neighbor's location and hunt him down.

As the game goes on, strategy becomes more important. New bombs appear in the maze periodically, but never quite enough. Being chased through the maze by a well-armed maniac and being unable to find a single bomb gets the adrenalin pumping.

We did manage to crash the game once, though I'm not sure how. One person rolled into a spot on the maze and couldn't move or be killed; another moved beside the first and froze as well. Hitting System Reset on all three computers got us out of that jam, and nothing else out of the ordinary took place in our playing.

Not Completely A-maze-ing

The maze in *MoA* updates quickly as you move and turn. The sound, though simple, doesn't distract from the gameplay. I've only got a few beefs with the game.

Beef #1: The size of the maze window. Your view of the maze fills the bottom third of the screen. It's just a bit too small for my liking.

[Editor's Note: If you are familiar with the old 8-bit game, *Way Out!*, the window is about that size. See the accompanying picture to get an idea of what this looks like.—RR]

Beef #2: No computer-controlled opponents. Since I can't always rustle up a friend or two to play

with, I'd appreciate being able to practice against my computer.

Beef #3: Each player is referred to only by a number. In the original *ST MidiMaze*, each player gives his name. Then after being killed, you'd be told who just killed you.

Beef #4: With each player needing his own computer and monitor, space quickly disappears. Two players on a single computer and single screen would let more people in on the fun, and permit users with only one computer to play as well.

Conclusion

MoA is a great addition to any 8-bit gamer's library. Its multi-player action is sure to be a favorite; an eight-player game would be great at any user-group games night. Be sure to register your copy; for only \$5.00 you can't go wrong. Here's hoping more software comes out which takes advantage of the GameLink II system; multiple player games are among the best. Thanks again, AGDA group!

Ordering information

MoA is available for download on both GEnie and CompuServe. You can also order the following direct from DataQue:

Part No	Description	Cost
MOA1P00F	Maze of AGDAgon Rev 1.00 Disk Version	\$6.00*
MOA1P01R	Maze of AGDAgon Rev 1.01 Cart Version	\$20.00*
AGDA2LINK	6ft Atari-8 DuoLink GameLinkII (GL2) Cable	\$10.00
AGDA3LINK	6ft Atari-8 TriLink GameLinkII (GL2) Cable	\$14.00
AGDA8LINK	OctoLink GameLinkII (GL2) PC Board	T.B.A.

* includes \$5.00 registration fee, discount if you have already registered this product (one-time registration fee per product).

All orders should include \$3.00 (US) for shipping and handling within US, \$5.00 (Canada) and \$10.00 elsewhere. All checks should be drawn on a US bank, in US funds, and be made out to: DataQue Products. There is a \$20 minimum for credit card orders, which are only available within the US, and only via the phone number below. Contact:

DataQue Products
 P.O. Box 134
 Ontario, OH 44862
 (419) 529-9797 Time: 1-5pm EST



Back to the Future— Atari 8-bits Take on “Wayne’s World”

By Margo A. Sullivan

Copyright 1994

CompuServe: 70272.1153

Community television producers on a shoestring budget can power up some neat effects with their Atari 8-bit

Picture this. You're in your local television studio on a live broadcast interviewing your state governor about his latest flap—Raccoongate. You see sweat bead up on his knuckles. He fumbles after your question. You start to circle in for the kill when, suddenly, you notice a pair of sneakers mincing along behind the stage curtain. Your ace cameraman's caught backstage and can't get out. Now may be an ideal time to flag down the control room and pop a graphic out of the “video toaster.”

NOT! Not if you can get an Atari 8-bit to do the job. Used judiciously—as a helpmate (not a substitute) for video equipment—your Atari 8-bit can help you avoid the dreaded “Community Programming Blue Curtain” zone.

About Community Programming Equipment

For anybody who slept through “Wayne’s World,” cable companies are obligated to air shows produced by local residents. (Key on the word “resident”; you don't have to be a customer to qualify, but you must live in the company's franchise area.) In most places, the companies also provide the equipment you need to produce a show—lights, cameras, microphones, editing suites, studios, and (for background) a blue curtain. (Okay, sometimes you get a gray curtain.) No surprise, the companies don't buy top-of-the-line equipment for community producers. Rumors circulate about toasters, but most community programmers (also called “access people”) get free use of a broken down character-generator that can't do anything except lettering, crawling, and rolling. Forget about graphics. Forget about wipes. You're lucky if you can fade in and fade out. Typically, community producers wind up with look-alike programs. The cameraman, slightly out of focus and too far away from the subject, zooms in to capture a mug shot of the guest—in profile, normally. Then the tech director switches back to a wide-angle shot (heavy on the curtain). The director can time these takes to last under three seconds and switch back-and-forth between the same two shots for half an hour—trapped inside the Blue Curtain Zone.

But if you get a director who understands the rhythm of a program and a cameraman who remembers to focus up, you can add an Atari 8-bit to bring some style to your program.

Why an Atari 8-bit?

Main reason: Gotta be money. The average Atari 8-bit software package costs about \$5. Since access television is produced as a public service, sponsors run the other way.

And, very few community programs get into distribution. Community producers can't afford more than \$5.

Backup reason: It's easy. Using a monitor pin (with RCA plugs attached), you can plug most 8-bit Ataris right into a camcorder or any VCR that features RCA input jacks. Recording closed-circuit bypasses problems with glitches on your television screen and also skips saves to the disk.

About Video Liberation

Knocking the disk out of the loop lets you look at RAM a whole new way. (If you're under 35 years old, skip this paragraph.) Consider *Movie Maker*, a product from Electronic Arts, for example. Having a measly 48K bugs me if I have to save the whole movie on disk. When I know I can tape to video, I can plan to edit segments in the studio and duck most RAM limitations.

I mention *Movie Maker* because animation, in small doses, works successfully with the 8-bit. Compared to other computers, the 8-bit's graphics look a lot like cartoons. Go with that impulse. Cartoons did a lot for Walt Disney; and when you have video cameras that produce pictures better than most any computer, why worry about the 8-bit's sorry pixel-skipping, dithering, and little GIFs? Having the video (and you can video still pictures, too) liberates you from trying to slap the 8-bit into shape.

The tail end of a show is a good place for an animation. In Stephen Spielberg's movies, right after the credits have finished, you'll see a little figure of ET riding the bicycle handlebars and the name of the production company come across the screen. The drawing uses one color. A nice composition has 4/5 of the screen dark and lets the animation come across a lighter colored band towards the bottom of the screen.

The bottom line: a distinguishing feature for your show that's fairly easy to do on the 8-bit Atari and makes a good example of a case where the computer will do better than the camera. Most camcorders lack built-in animation. You would have to shoot each drawing for the same duration on the camera's counter, 00:00:01, for example. This produces about 30 frames, too many frames, for each shot. Smoothing would have to be done in the editing suite.

Trouble Shooting

Here are some fundamentals you should know if you want to make video with your Atari 8-bit.

The Set Up. Most RCA plugs are color-coded black or yellow for video and red and/or white for audio. I bought a monitor pin with one black and one red RCA plug and, believe it or not, on mine, the black's for audio and the red's for video. (There's probably a good reason why.) So, feel free to experiment.

Some VCRs, the cheap ones, have RCA jacks for output only. That means you can't tape from your Atari to that type of VCR.

Sync Breaks. When you tape from the Atari to your camcorder or to your VCR, every time you interrupt recording, by turning machines off or hitting BREAK or RESET, you will make a sync break in your videotape.

The practical aspects of sync are hard to grasp for people who haven't worked with video. If you're in that group, you'll get it when you try to edit videotape. Take the *Movie Maker* example. I'm going to make a big, long movie by taping segments. When I do, I wind up with a tape full of sync breaks, which I can't broadcast as-is. It has to be edited.

Never put anything important at the very beginning of a tape and record everything at least six seconds longer than you need. Tape rolls back 5 seconds, and any image within 5 seconds of a sync break cannot be copied to a master tape during editing. Even if the picture looks perfect on the original.

Basically, a master tape (the show tape that gets broadcast) has no sync breaks. A sync break will broadcast like video snow and may blow your program right off the airwaves. To get the good sync, the master tape is "blacked" before it's edited. You can black a tape using the Atari 8-bit just by recording its output for the tape's duration—62 minutes or so for a 60-minute tape because they're always a few minutes longer than advertised. You have to stick around and hit a key every once in a while for safety. And remember, this tape's going to the studio to be the show tape. If you record on this tape after you've blacked it, you'll make sync breaks whenever you interrupt the signal.

White Backgrounds. Be careful of using too much white in the background. On some broadcasting equipment, white bleeds into the audio registers and generates a buzz that's pure torture.

Letters. Two of the three character generators I have used employ slicker-looking letters than my Atari 8-bit. A character generator will create credit rolls well and crawls (less successfully) but will not do wipes. When I want the Atari's letters, I use a product called *Picture Plus+* (from Antic). The standard character option looks good broadcast in white or yellow. (Although white's bad for backgrounds, it's the easiest color to read for letters.)

Tracking Problems. Sometimes, the Atari 8-bit video will look compressed on professional editing equipment. Strange zipper-effects and wavy colored lines turn up. Use the video tracking dials on the editing decks to fix such problems.

Favorite 8-bit Recipes. *AtariArtist*, with the Rainbow feature, creates effective displays. I use this product to

For more information about television production, check out these publications.

BBC Television Training Manuals. These manuals run into money but do provide helpful methods for handling scripts, storyboards, editing, and shooting. The BBC manuals, *From Script to Screen: Documentaries*, *Shooting on Location*, *Continuity Notes*, *After Tea We'll Do the Fight: Filming Action*—to name a few, work out typical problems on one-camera shoots which are the norm for community producers. Write: BBC Television Training, BBC Elstree Center, Clarendon Road, Borehamwood Hertfordshire, United Kingdom.

TV Technology. This magazine, at a price most community producers can afford (free), features a column called, "Focus on Editing." The author, Jay Ankeney, usually offers some good tips on the usual problems—like interviews with people who say "um" too often. Write: TV Technology, P.O. Box 1214, Falls Church, VA 22041-9808.

Animation. The 8-bit software packages amount to productivity tools—great for people who already know animation art. For a crash course, I like "The Animator's Workbook" by Tony White (Billboard Publications, Inc., 1515 Broadway, New York, NY 10036).

Organizations: *Alliance for Community Media*, 666 11th Street, NW Suite #806, Washington, DC 20001. Phone: (202) 393-2650. *Society of Motion Picture and Television Engineers*, 595 West Hartsdale Avenue, White Plains, NY 10607. Phone: (914) 761-1100.

make a slate at the end of our show with the name of our production company. To complicate matters, you don't get any letters with *AtariArtist*. But nothing's impossible. I move the graphic into *Rambrandt* (another Antic package) where I get all the letters I want. There's also a great conversion program that comes with *Rambrandt* to go between everything—every product I own, anyway. I even get letters in plaid. (Well, looks like plaid—Near Plaid Quality.) Then I pop back to *Artist*, flick on rainbow, and record my slate. Look for ROTV.PIC on Compuserve—in the Atari Gaming Forum. (GO ATARI8)

Another familiar trick can be accomplished with *Picture Plus+*. Fans of the BBC's "Miss Marple" series with Joan Hickson may recall the drawing on the credit roll that shifts left-justified to right-justified. The drawing (of Miss Marple herself) suggests a watercolor more than a cartoon, but *Computereyes* (from Digital Vision) with lots of trial and error might capture a similar painterly look. And *Picture Plus+* can do the screen shift. (Anybody else old enough to remember Joan Hickson in the role of Mrs. Kidder when Margaret Rutherford played Miss Jane? Thought not.)

Imagine the credit roll as a merger between a background file (prepared at home with the Atari) and a credit roll (made inside the editing suite with the character generator). The background file has the drawing, which shifts from left-justified to right-justified (or vice versa). To time the points when the drawing shifts (as well as the duration of the background

recording) use your show theme music. Shift the drawing at the end of a musical measure—say, every five or six bars. You can always re-record your theme music in the studio if you don't like the sound quality you get at home.

In the studio, compose the credit roll on the character generator specifying the transparent background. When the roll goes onto the record (master) tape, and you have to input your background as the source tape at the same time that you run the credit roll; credits and background will be merged.

Summing Up

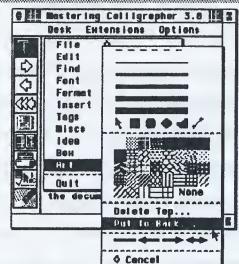
The cable company is supposed to provide training and help—especially with tough jobs like credit rolls. If they don't, contact the Public Utilities Commission Cable Television Department to find alternatives. As long as you can describe your goals, you should be able to get the right answers.

Television is said to be 90% sound. People will report a bad picture when the audio fails and a good picture when the audio comes in strong—even when the picture flutters. Take a cue from 8-bit graphics. A big picture with a bold outline and a simple color scheme works best. Generally, don't broadcast graphics that use dithering. It's too hard to see.

You can spice up your video master piece by using your Atari 8-bit computer. I do. It's a cheap alternative. There are several good programs out there that fit the bill.

Finally, break the rules for fun. It's your production.

New Software From Spar Systems

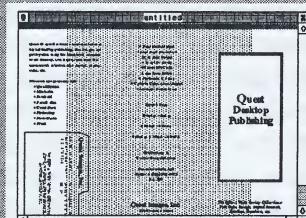


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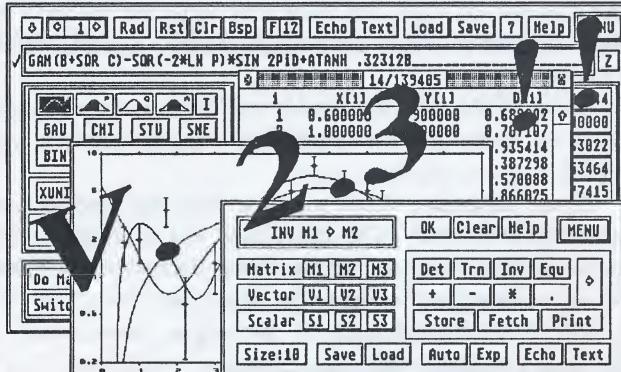
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Information available on all software

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E1 Cal The Math Machine

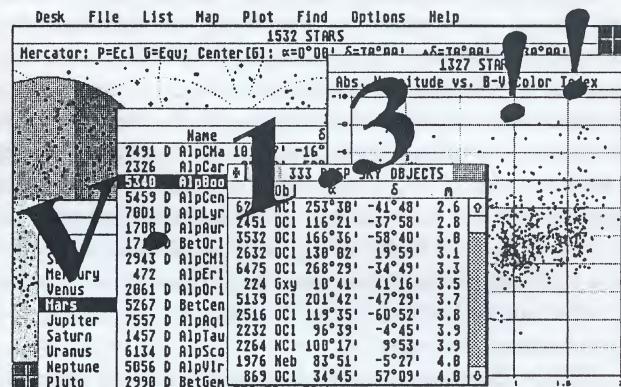


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Version 2.3 plots in color, runs in the new Falcon resolutions (also in TT High and Medium). \$63.

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Send a check (\$US on a US bank) or money order to Debonair Software, P.O.B. 521166, SLC, UT 84152-1166

Welcome to the first installment of "The Delphi Forum." This column will discuss the happenings on the Delphi Internet Service. Since Delphi is the only online network with complete internet access, I feel it would be appropriate to start with a discussion of the internet.

What is the Internet?

I'm sure many of you out there have at least heard of the internet and are wondering what it is. Basically, the internet is a large network of computers. Accessible through this network is an enormous potpourri of information.

There are no restrictions on the types of files or messages that can be posted, unlike the commercial networks. Because the internet is connected throughout the world, it is considered the largest computer network on the planet (and growing each day).

Up until recently, the internet has only been accessible through universities and businesses. But recently, commercial networks have started to provide access to various parts of the internet. These are the main parts to the internet: internet mail, ftp (file transfer protocol), telnet (remote login) and usenet (a large message base). Most commercial networks only give you access to internet mail, but Delphi provides access to the entire internet.

Using Delphi Internet Mail

Delphi provides both incoming and outgoing internet mail to all its users. Internet mail is received the same as normal mail; all you need to do is make people aware of your internet mail address. For example, my Delphi address is PLEFEBVRE. Therefore, my address for receiving internet mail through Delphi would be:

PLEFEBVRE@DELPHI.COM

(the case is insignificant). The "DELPHI.COM" tells the internet that mail with this address should be forwarded to the COMmercial DELPHI network. When Delphi receives the internet mail, it gets forwarded to PLEFEBVRE as per usual.

Delphi also allows users to send mail to other users on the internet (including other commercial networks with internet mail). Sending internet mail is just as easy as sending regular mail. After you type "/mail" to get to the mail menu, type "send" to send your mail. The normal Delphi "To:" prompt will appear. When sending Delphi email, you normally type a Delphi email address here. To send internet mail you need to include the special internet modifier that tells Delphi that this mail message is to be sent out to the internet. The format for an outgoing internet email message is : IN%"internet.address". The % and quotes MUST be included.

For example, if I wanted to send mail to our friendly publisher, Joe Waters (who is on GENie), from Delphi, I



would use this address: IN%"joe.waters@genie.geis.com". Delphi would send the mail message out to the internet, and it would get forwarded to GENie and then eventually to Joe.

Other Delphi Mail Notes

With Delphi, users also have the ability to send binary files through email. Unfortunately, this feature is not commonly understood. Sending binary files does take a little bit of work, but is not at all difficult.

Sending binary files requires using your "workspace." Each Delphi user

has his own personal workspace, a place where files can be stored. For example, the text file with all your mail messages is stored here. Enter your workspace by typing "work" at a Delphi menu. At the workspace prompt (WS>), type "upload" and select "binary" as the file type. After the file has been uploaded, exit from your workspace and go to the mail area. Type "send filename.ext" at the mail prompt. Delphi will then prompt for a To: list and subject information. I recommend typing the filename on the subject line so that the person receiving the file will know what it is. Once that is filled in, the file will be sent.

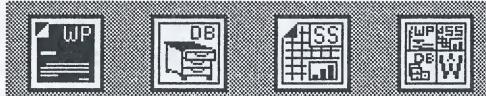
Receiving a binary file is a little trickier. When you go to the mail area to view mail, binary files will be displayed as gibberish. To make this gibberish into a usable file, follow these steps:

1. Type "control-o" or wait for a "More?" prompt.
2. At the prompt, type "extract/noheader filename.ext". Hopefully, the filename will have been specified in the subject line. If not, just use any filename you want.
3. Go to your workspace and type "download filename.ext" using the same filename previously specified.
4. Once you have the file on your computer, you might need to run WHATIS.PRG to find out what kind of file it is. I recommend that people include the filename in the subject line so that this step can be avoided.
5. You will probably want to delete the file from your workspace after you download it: Delphi charges extra if you have many things stored in your workspace. To delete a file, use the delete command (del) followed by the filename.

Next Time

Next month, I will be covering usenet and I should have a few other Delphi tidbits strewn here and there. Remember, Delphi has weekly conferences on Tuesdays at 10 pm eastern. I hope to see some new faces.

AtariWorks Word Processor



Textmongering with Style and Grace

by Michael 'Papa' Hebert

Reprise

Last month's column provided a broad overview of the combination of *AtariWorks* and *SpeedoGDOS*. If you thought it read more like a press release than a *Current Notes* review, you are right. I am excited by the capabilities inherent in *AtariWorks* and my enthusiasm shows. As my review progresses, I will try to point out those areas where *AtariWorks* could use improvement.

In the rush of getting the article ready for submission, I neglected to mention what *AtariWorks* requires in the way of system hardware and what the installation process involves. I have added that information to the end of this month's review.

Style and Grace

Those two words sum up the *AtariWorks Word Processor*. *SpeedoGDOS* (Speedo) frees you from the limitation of your printer's built in selection of fonts. You can have the same kind of flexibility in selecting and sizing typefaces that DTP programs like *Pagestream* or *Calamus* provide. The beauty of Speedo fonts and the effects that you can create with them are fully supported by easy-to-use text formatting tools.

The beauty of Speedo fonts may be what sells *AtariWorks*, but the real power lies in the array of text formatting tools provided. Like any word processor worthy of the name, *AtariWorks* allows you to format your text with left, right, centered, or full justification. Attributes such as bold, italic, underline, outline, superscript or subscript can be applied to any selected character or block of text. Line spacing can be set to single, one-and-a-half, or double. Left, right, center, and decimal tabs can be placed anywhere on the ruler bar and you can have multiple rulers in the document. Headers and footers can be created and automatic page numbering implemented.

What does this add up to? A first class word processor with more to offer than anything else in its price class, right? Absolutely... But that's only half of what's there. *AtariWorks* lets you EASILY link those formatting tools together to create paragraph macros.

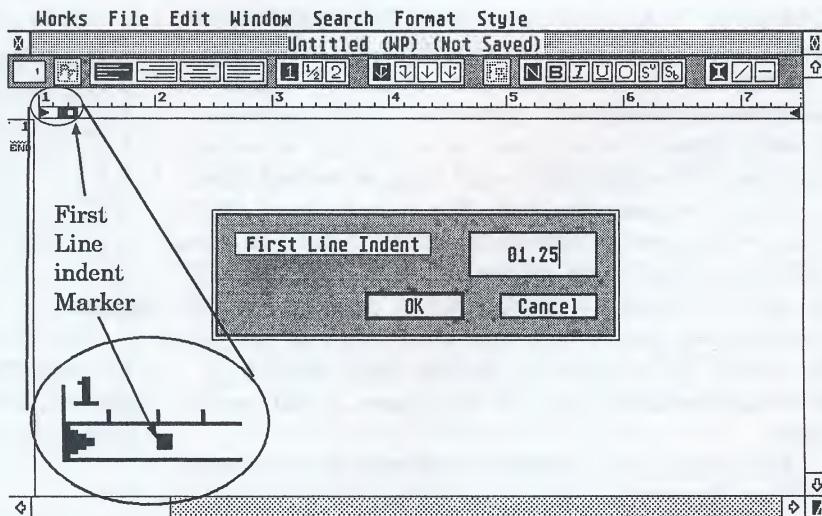
That is what takes *AtariWorks* out of the realm of "just another good word processor" and plants it squarely as a contender against document processors like *Calligrapher*, *That's Write*, and *Wordflair*.

"For Instance"

AtariWorks is a paragraph-based word processor. Every text block in *AtariWorks* is regarded as a separate paragraph even if it is only one letter on a line followed by a carriage return. The default format for paragraphs in *AtariWorks* is block left with hidden tabs every quarter inch. You prefer the first line of paragraphs indented a quarter of an inch and you don't want any tabs? Simple. There is a small block located within the triangle marker on the left end of the tab bar. Click on it and drag it to the right. A box appears on screen telling you exactly where you are positioning it. Or, you can double-click on that little block then enter the indent in a dialog box.

Now click on 'Copy Format ...' under the Format selection on the Menu Bar. Another dialog box pops open for you to assign a name to this new format. Call it "Indent" and hit [Return]. That mysterious little "PF" icon isn't grayed out anymore. Click on it and you will find Indent listed in the drop down selector.

To round out your letter writing macros, you want to set up dates flush against the right margin and your letter closing at five inches from the left side of the paper. Clear the indent by sliding it back to the left margin. Click on the Right Indent icon in the Tool Bar, position your mouse arrow in the tab bar, then



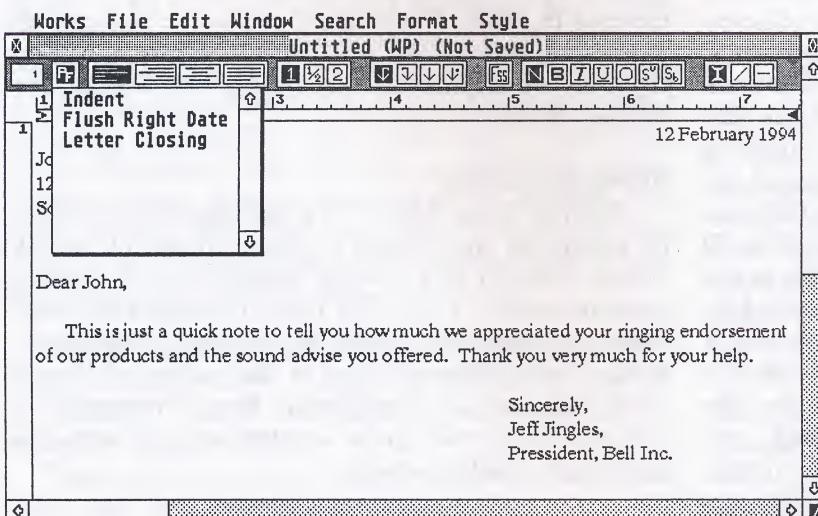
double-click. Up pops the dialog box. Enter a value 1/100th of an inch in from the right margin, i.e. 7.49 inches if you are using 7.50 inches as the right margin. Now click on 'Copy Format ...' under the Format menu and name this macro "Flush Right Date." Why the 1/100th inch offset? It prevents a conflict between the Right Tab and the Right Indent that sometimes occurs when they are set to the same value. This is a minor annoyance, but it really should not occur.

Clear the right tab by dragging it into the editing area of the screen. Now select the Left Tab icon, double-click in the tab bar, and enter 5.0 inches in the dialog box. Click on 'Copy Format ...' and assign "Letter Closing" as the macro name.

Proceed over to the File menu and click on 'Save Format/Style ...' The file selector opens. Type "LETTERS.FMT" and hit [Return]. You have now created a simple set of macros for letter writing. You can use them on the fly by clicking on the "PF" icon, selecting the appropriate format then typing the text. If you prefer to do your editing first and format later, all you have to do is position the text cursor anywhere in the text then click on "PF" and select the format that is to be applied to that paragraph.

An *AtariWorks* Format/Style macro is a combination of paragraph format (block left, right, centered or full justified), line spacing (1, 1 1/2 or 2 line spaces) and the settings of indents and tabs on the tab bar. You can create as many macros as you like, each one tuned to a specific type of document.

AtariWorks maintains a WORKS.INF file that contains, among other information, the filename of the last macro used. Herein lies one of the areas where *AtariWorks* could use some improvement. There is no configuration file for setting up defaults. *AtariWorks* assumes that you will be using the same page layout and macros that you last used. If you happened



to be using a landscape page layout with a set of macros peculiar to a specific task, that is what you will have the next time you start *AtariWorks*.

I would prefer to see a WORKS.CNF file for default settings and a WORKS.LAY file for page layouts. The .CNF file would load in the default font and size, paragraph format file and page layout information. Changing to a different page layout or set of paragraph macros would be a matter of selecting it from the File menu.

I use a "workaround" to deal with the lack of a configuration file. I have created a set of blank page documents with various page layouts. When I need a particular page layout, I open the blank page document instead of creating a new one. All my most commonly used macros are in a file entitled DEFAULT.FMT.

Font Macros, Too

In addition to the paragraph Format/Style macros you can also have font macros. These are created by clicking on 'Macro ...' under the Style menu. A name and function key are assigned to the macro, then a font, point size and attributes (if any) are set. You can, for instance, create "Headline" assigned to F1 with Swiss 721 Bold at 24 points. By using both unshifted and shifted function keys, up to 20 such macros can be created. To apply the macro you would click on your headline then press F1 or press F1 then type the headline. A set of predefined font macros can be a real time saver when it comes time to format a document that has already been edited. If you don't remember which function key is assigned to a macro you can click on the "Fss" icon in the tool bar. A scrolling menu box drops down for you to make the selection.

The font macros are also saved in the paragraph Format/Style file. This gives you instant access to the fonts and paragraph formats you have defined for any specific document type. The font macros are NOT linked to the paragraph macros. I would prefer to see an option to create these links. It would make defining a macro a little more complicated, but the process of post-edit formatting a document would be much more of an intuitive process. An examination of the .FMT file shows that this may have originally been a part of pre-release *AtariWorks*, or possibly a planned addition to future versions.

Yet to Come

The wealth of features in the *AtariWorks Word Processor* makes it impossible to adequately cover them all at one time. This month's review showed you

some of the power to be found on the tool bar. Next month, I plan to go into Page Layout, the rest of the tool bar and, space permitting, editing options. Those of you who are waiting to learn about database and spreadsheet capabilities will have to be patient.

System Requirements

The minimum practical system on which to run *AtariWorks* is an ST with color monitor in medium resolution, two megabytes or more of RAM and a hard drive. Note that I said this is the minimum practical system. *AtariWorks* requires approximately 850K of running room, which limits the number of AUTO folder programs and ACC's that can be used. While it is possible to run on a system employing two double-sided floppy drives, you will be limited to only the fonts and drivers you can fit on one disk. *AtariWorks* was written to be run from a hard drive.

SpeedoGDOS includes a selection of drivers to support all the common printers including 9-pin and 24-pin dot matrix, inkjet, and laserjet printers. Emulations include Epson FX80, Star NB15, NEC-P series, HP deskjet, Canon bubblejet, HP laserjet and Atari SLM laser printers. You should not have any difficulty finding a driver to match your printer, although you may have to experiment a bit. Epson LQ850 printers use the Star NB15 driver and Panasonic 24-pin printers take the NEC-P driver.

Installation

The installation utilities provided on the *Speedo* and *AtariWorks* distribution disks are meant to be used for installation to a hard drive. Using them is simplicity itself. Just click on INSTALL.PRG and respond to the path prompts.

Installation for use on a floppy-based system is more difficult. You must manually create the various folders and copy the appropriate files into them. The boot disk needs an AUTO folder containing SPEEDO.PRG and a GEMSYS folder containing the printer driver, DRIVER.PRG and OUTLINE.PRG (renamed versions of DRIVER.ACC and OUTLINE.ACC) and your selection of fonts. The proverbial "fly in the ointment" here is that Speedo fonts are identified by codes rather than font names. You can use an ASCII text viewer to look at the "xxxx.SPD" files to identify them since the font name is included in the file header. Basically, what you will need are BX000003.SPD (Swiss 721), BX000011.SPD (Dutch 801) and either BX019831.SPD (Symbols) or



BX143219.SPD (More Wingbats). After you have the files on the boot disk, you run DRIVER.PRG to create the ASSIGN.SYS file then OUTLINE.PRG to create the EXTEND.SYS file.

Installing *AtariWorks* to a floppy is a bit easier. It will need to go on a separate disk, which does not have to be bootable. Create a folder entitled WORKS. Then, within WORKS, create a folder called WORKSYS. Copy WORKS.PRG into the WORKS folder and copy the appropriate resource files into WORKSYS. Don't copy the dictionary or thesaurus files; there won't be enough room on the disk.

The Speedo disk must remain in drive A while you run *AtariWorks* from drive B. When you start *AtariWorks*, change fonts, or print, the Speedo information *AtariWorks* needs will be read from drive A.

I would take Atari to task over the hassle that is required to install to a floppy-based system except for one fact: *AtariWorks* was NEVER INTENDED to be used on a floppy-based system. Period. End of sentence. Terminate paragraph.

Caveat Revisited

On January 27th, Pradip, the creator of *AtariWorks*, appeared on the GEnie *AtariWorks* topic with a short post announcing that he believes he has corrected the "Black Page Syndrome." The fix had been forwarded to Atari's beta testers to be wrung out before releasing it. Preliminary feedback from the field has been positive, but it is unknown at this time how the remedy will be distributed. I would personally like to see it posted as a "patch" program on GEnie, CIS, and Delphi as well as being supplied to all the Atari dealers. Until I know something further, my warning remains in effect. If you are a prudent type, hold off purchasing *AtariWorks* until BPS is definitely cured. If you're the adventurous sort, just go out and get the "danged thang!"

About the Author

Michael 'Papa' Hebert is a self-employed electronics technician specializing in closed circuit TV, access control systems and sewing machine repair (sewing machine repair? Yup!). His Atari 1040STe and *AtariWorks* are used extensively in the day-to-day operations of his business. 'Papa' is the author of "Papa's Grafik Guide to *AtariWorks* Word Processor," a 100-page illustrated guide created entirely with the *AtariWorks* word processor.

Atari in the STicks

Henry K van Eyken

“Equal Goes It Loose”

A Systems View of Language

Getting a cross can simply be across to bear.

The slightest syncopation can make a message falter and, when that happens, the sender does best to repeat it: *Getting across can simply be a cross to bear.* Removing excess clarifies further, *Getting across can be a cross to bear;* as does simplification, *Getting across can be tough.* Formal attire usually wears well, *It can be difficult to make oneself understood,* but if plaid better suits the occasion then so be it, *It can be hard to make yourself clear.*

Freeze-Dried English

Here comes the title of a serious document: *The Limited English Proficient Student in the College Science Classroom.* It took me a while to grasp its meaning. Does this way of putting things herald the 21st century? Or had the title been composed for electronic filing? It does resemble an address on Internet, doesn't it: *The Limited.English.Proficiency.Student@College.Science.Classroom?* It struck me as ironic when I fathomed the author's purpose: to alert teachers to problems suffered by students with poor language skills, mainly students for whom English is a second language, and to solicit cooperation in addressing their problem. The paper concluded that

Educating college-level LEP students is not the sole responsibility of teachers of English. It is ours, too, even though we are teachers of science.

So, there you go; but I believe that the bill would have been adequately filled with: *Let's Help Science Students with their English.*

I don't like criticizing other people's writings. My own writing is not exemplary and well I know that.¹ But if we all continue to suffer quietly the mental grind of poor communications, where then will it end? How many hours, nay, days, would it have saved readers if the author of a software manual had taken precautions to make himself clear to those interested in his product? How often have we abandoned a project because obscure language trespassed on our patience? And, back in school again, how many students might have done better in their studies had they not been ground down by poor textbooks, to say nothing of incoherent lectures?²

¹ English is not my mother tongue and I have not been formally schooled in its use. But I served eight years as editor of a technical publication. These facts combine to make me aware of my shortcomings.

² Students, it seems to me, put too much faith in the printed word. Isn't it often the victim who feels guilty?

We are products of circumstances, past and present; we cannot, therefore, be fully responsible for what we do. This is not to say we shouldn't be *held* responsible. In accord with this systemic view of original sin and possible redemption, it does not behoove me or anyone else to poke fun at people's often less desirable modes of behavior. But, in our roles as parents or teachers or authors or managers, we attempt to correct bad habits of the past; certainly we are expected to do so. Thus, we might also take on some burden for improving our speech and writing. Such disciplining should benefit our neural thinking, of course, and, by its pervasive effect, should lead to better electronic thinking as well. One way to foster progress is by supporting one another as fellow members of a learning society.³ It is in this spirit I'm writing; not to preach, but to share a concern.

Impossible Dream

That science teacher is not alone in believing that teachers, other than those of language, should seek to improve their students' writing. The Senate of Montreal's Dawson College, for example, makes it a point that *all* teachers must help upgrade their students' language skills. By adopting a motion to that effect, Senate tacitly assumed that all teachers are competent to undertake such a task. My experience shows that, unfortunately, this is not the case at all. It is socially painful to point this out, but one cannot combat a crippling affliction by ignoring it. And when I write *crippling* you better believe it!

Even if all college teachers were competent editors, much of modern students' written work is fractured so badly that it is impossible to correct, in a single, hasty pass, a paper's content along with the manner of its presentation.⁴ Un-critical academic promotion during primary and secondary schooling has led, or, at least, strongly contributed, to intellectual meltdown. One colleague who tries to cope with this is a teacher of linguistics, philosophy, and literature and who,

³ In *The Fifth Discipline: The Art & Practice of The Learning Organization* (Doubleday, 1990), Peter M. Senge examines five components critical to the success of modern corporations. I think that also informal organizations, such as computists in touch with one another, can benefit from (1) proper *mental models*, (2) *personal mastery*, (3) *shared vision*, (4) *team learning*, and that 5th discipline, *systems thinking*.

⁴ The haste comes boxed with lesson and exam schedules, a neat packaging of time that ignores students' (and teachers') individual differences. With increasingly robotized industry, Adam Smith's invisible hand is already guiding communal *systems thinking* toward communicating and learning.

I am confident, is more than sufficiently competent in all three domains. He wrote,

Once warmed to the task of marking students' assignments I am capable of mechanically correcting grammar and spelling even though I am well aware that the content, what is being said, makes no sense whatever. It is as if my mind, or some orthographic segment of it, has switched to automatic pilot.⁵

and follows through with a saddening assessment,

Clearly the whole process is self-defeating. To correct the grammar or spelling of a piece of nonsense is to invest it with some kind of pseudo value and obscure its inherent emptiness.

My experience and view are much the same. We must ask ourselves, how can this demeaning imposition by *the system*—the marking and grading of intellectual nothingness—how can this pointless affirmation of nigh incorrigible failure possibly contribute to education?

Here, then, laid bare are two roots of much evil: (1) students admitted to college without adequate tools needed to study and learn effectively, and (2) subsequent measures which, however well intended, address the problem inadequately. Failures unchecked by our schools accumulate to plague us in daily life. Isolated problems combine to become systemic problems. What will be the point of information superhighways, disgorging in our brains packets that only add to mental fragmentation?

After years of inadequate management of our educational affairs, it should be little wonder that many bright people, among them first-rate professionals, *including truly dedicated teachers*, are unable to write clearly. In my everyday life I find that, among other texts, many software manuals and even books for college students are defective as a result. As for poorly or unedited college texts, Heaven have mercy on their publishers!⁶

No Fare For Frumpish Folk

What above I called *freeze-dried English* often demands such sudden decelerations in reading speed that navigating a text can become a disagreeable experience. We often, perhaps habitually, react by letting momentum carry us forward without paying enough attention to what the writer wishes to convey:

This 64-bit architecture was designed to make the best use of superscalar instruction dispatch, which

⁵ David Fielding, "The Classroom Aphasias." Unpublished, 1989.

⁶ Textbook publishers allocate funds otherwise available for editing to sales luncheons for teachers. Is commerce skewing the debate about what factors more in intelligence, nature or nurture?

is the ability of the hardware to take a sequential instruction stream and dispatch (or issue) several instructions per clock cycle to other execution units.⁷

Did you get the messages? Let's see. No looking back now! Here, for five points each: (1) What is *superscalar*? (2) What's the difference, if a difference is indeed intended, between *dispatch* and *issue*? Mind you, that was a relatively easy paragraph. Just for beginners.

The point of this exercise was to show that even technophiles may have a hard time with this kind of literature. Is it a wonder that many people consider computing too unfriendly for their affections? That they simply turn away from it? But, then again, maybe the paragraph gave you no trouble at all! Maybe you are alright, for now. Wait until you get hit by the writing of, say, ten years hence.

Zap Before You Zip

College students desirous of passing their courses cannot turn away from their reading materials. They must chew whatever they are given to bite off. I am going to cause you a moment of discomfort, earnest reader, but be so kind as to bear with me in the interest of gaining a better understanding of a very, very serious societal problem. I am going to quote from a college laboratory manual that has been assigned as mandatory reading for students. Here goes:

The radiant energy emitted by the sun (or other stars) contains *all* possible wavelengths of electromagnetic radiation. The portion of this radiation to which the retina of the human eye responds is called the visible light region of the electromagnetic spectrum. The fact that the radiation emitted by the sun contains a mixture of radiation wavelengths may be demonstrated by passing sunlight through a prism. A prism bends light; the degree to which light is bent is related to the wavelength of the light. When sunlight (or other white light) containing all possible wavelengths is passed through a prism, each component color of the white light is bent to a different extent by the prism, resulting in the beam of white light being spread out into a complete rainbow of colors; this is called a continuous spectrum.⁸

"I didn't have time to make it shorter," Blaise Pascal once ended a letter he felt was too long. But I assume that this 17th-century mathematician did understand what he was writing about. I can't pay the same homage to the author of the

⁷ Tom Thompson, "PowerPC Performs for Less," *Byte*, Aug. 1993, p.59. The given example is not a criticism of the author. Readers of *Byte* recognize this writing as normal fare for the publication. But one wonders what fraction of *Byte*'s occasional buyers are the wiser for it.

⁸ *Chemistry 101 Lab Manual*. Collection of experiments selected from materials provided by D.C. Heath Canada Ltd. and formally catalogued as ISBN 0669-00508-8.

above paragraph, which is an affront to both, medium and message. Every sentence needs correcting for form as well as for fact (see Addendum). Thus, before any electronic compression, the whole can be shrunk by 83%, and with vast gain in clarity to boot:

Sunlight may be decomposed by a glass prism into a spread of colors such as seen in a rainbow. Such a spread is called a *continuous spectrum*.

Yet, the text had been written, edited, printed, and selected to contribute to the scientific edification of college students.⁹ The selecting had been done by teachers who are by Senatorial edict required to contribute to the linguistic skills of their students. To allay any suspicion that I have been over selective for the sake of making a point let me state flat out that the quality of this item pretty well represents the quality of the entire manual and, to some extent, of other instructional texts.

A Master's Voice

A complete description of a simple automaton would be simpler than the automaton itself, but a description of something complex is bound to be more complex than what it purports to describe. Hence, a complex system is its own simplest description. I didn't dream up this shocker; mathematician John von Neumann worked it out.¹⁰ This insight makes it reasonable to surmize that neither people nor computers can acquire perfect language skills by feeding them rules.¹¹ However, there are some kinds of linguistic affronts so prevalent that a short list of rules, admonitions, and appeals to common sense can help us clean up much of the mess. One time-tested source is a teeny-weeny paperback whose origin dates to 1919. It runs about 80 pages of main text, depending on edition, and is called *The Elements of Style*.¹² It is mostly rules with annotations that convince almost as much as they insist what is the right thing to do. It also makes it clear not to follow rules blindly. A few hours spent with it, enjoyable hours most likely, may cure 95 percent of what's wrong with our writing. The author was William Strunk, a professor at Cornell University. One of his students, E.B. White, revived and revised it in 1957 to suit the times, and it is still available in a so-manest edition.

"Equal Goes It Loose"

For this enigmatic aphorism you won't find a cure in Strunk's little book. Credit for it has been given to Heinrich

⁹ Do people familiar with a text's subject matter and trust in the author read it critically?

¹⁰ Jeremy Campbell, *Grammatical Man: Information, Entropy, Language, and Life*. Simon and Schuster, 1982, p.257. (As a generalist I must depend on secondary sources.)

¹¹ And ought to tell us there are limits to what can be expected from machine translation.

¹² William Strunk Jr. and E.B. White, *The Elements of Style*. Macmillan Publishers Co., Inc., New York.

Lbke, one-time German head of state. Why, one might ask, should a man of such stature utter such nonsense? Well, you probably guessed it: word-for-word translation, for all I know, by some program for machine translation. But no word is an island. Herr Lbke must have said something like, "Gleich geht es los" or "Egal geht es los," which, to the best of my knowledge, might translate to either "Here we go!" or "Life goes on just the same."

Not all translations are quite as bad, but after having struggled, as many of you have, with a number of computer books, such as published by Abacus Software, I have grown to dislike the prospect of reading text translated on the cheap. *Equal goes it loose* is the first sentence of the Introduction to a 16-page manual that comes with the screen accelerator, NVDI, v.2.5.¹³ Alright, I may not be in dire need of Herr Lbke's aphorism, but I do feel I am missing something worthwhile when the manual brushes off the why of me wanting to toggle *Line A* with:

Switches Line-A on and off. This is a nice feature to check if your programs are Line A-clean.

Great stuff; worth every penny of the \$85 I spent on it, I'm sure. But what do they mean with *Line A-clean*? And why would I ever want to turn off such a nice feature? This could not simply be a poor or lazy translation, could it? "Phooey" onto the publisher who tries to maximize profit at his customers' peril.

Ever noticed that translations utterly fail when you need accurate detail most? Could it be that the problem stems from a technical wizard's inability to phrase a clear explanation in his own language, that thereby he made an amateur translator stumble, and that, in the end, his clientele become the victims?

We are fortunate that many authors of public domain and shareware programs are more considerate than some commercial publishers. That they and their friends put pride before price by doing an admirable job of something that's pretty tough. Even if things do not always work out too well, we still appreciate their efforts. But for a commercial enterprise to produce or translate instructional text on the cheap there shall be no excuse.

Reading manuals is not exactly what makes computing the fascinating hobby it is, and many people do go to great lengths to take the pain out of it as well they can. For example, I recently obtained some software from Gribnif-Stalker and Geneva. The manuals with these products are outstanding. I know that at least one professional writer worked on the one for Geneva and it shows!

Limits of Language

Our scientific culture's insatiable need for new words and clear expression makes a language grow and change. Moreover, actual or imagined cultural differences make for localized

¹³ *NVDI User Guide*. Behne & Behne Systemsoftware GbR, 1993, p.4.

idioms. Then there are people of artistic bent who weave novel forms of expression that may enlighten, or that may mislead. Thus, language is an evolving, living entity that we must at once depend on and, yet, cannot entirely rely on. Bear in mind, also, that as stored language ages, its meaning, that what the reader derives from it, changes unless preservatives are added, such as ironclad definitions and symbols. However, even so, bear in mind that iron rusts.

A wide variety of qualifiers is needed to help us describe forever more narrowly focussed perceptions that go with evolving differentiation among the experienced world's constituent particles and colors and feelings. Adjectives are the simple, time-honored qualifiers of nouns; and adverbs are of verbs and adjectives. But the need for ever narrower differentiation can become suffocating. I presume that many of us are looking forward to benefiting from a *performance optimized with enhanced reduced instruction set chip*, aren't we?¹⁴ Here a verbal septet plays the role of adjective for telling us something about *chip*.¹⁵ The backlash of habits we may acquire as a result can easily get limited English proficient students to displace brethren whose proficiency in English is merely limited.

At this stage of evolution, it seems to me, language, in particular technical language, reaches a critical complexity that marks the limits of its competence to serve us comfortably. Even hyphens, once the common stand-by for marking verbal togetherness as in *common-sense talk*, can't cope well in technical writing. We wouldn't want to try multiple-hyphenated artifices like *limited-English=proficiency students* with double bonds expressing greater allegiance than single ones, would we?

It may well be that technical English will be politically recognized worldwide as an entity quite distinct from a social vernacular.¹⁶ Certainly, the time has come, as the occasional browser of *Byte* may attest, to invent better ways of packaging complex ideas and of getting them across more efficiently among ourselves and our computers. A topic for sometime soon will be living with holes in our heads and talking

¹⁴ But to select such a chip we must further differentiate. We might begin with an MPC601. I found that part of the chip's functioning is described by *RISC processors are based on pipelines*. Such diluted explanations seem on the increase and penetrate students' writings.

¹⁵ Seven independent concepts (such as the meanings of words) is roughly the limit of human short-term memory. We can carry an ordinary seven-digit telephone number around for a while, but just try to keep in your mental clutches an oversea's telephone number! This peculiar property of the mind must be considered when contemplating the twinning of neural mind and microchip.

¹⁶ "The language of progress," *The Economist*, Jan. 15, 1994, p.37: Malaya's prime minister announced that scientific and technical university courses would no longer be taught in Malay, but in English. This begs the question of creolization and an eventual need for adopting some Superduper-English by universities around the world. *Ad infinitum*.

through (and with) them. Holes in many shades of grey. But right now I want to return to Strunk's little book. And then I must find some time to make my missives shorter.

And if I can't, well ... equal goes it loose.

Addendum

SPECTRUM.ZAP.ZIP

* The radiant energy emitted by the sun (or other stars) contains *all* possible wavelengths of electromagnetic radiation.

Radiant is superfluous; no other energy is emitted. However, in the context of the sentence it would be better to replace *radiant energy* by *radiation*. The word *or* incorrectly distinguishes the Sun (use capital for proper name) from other stars. I am reluctant to accept on the author's authority that all electromagnetic radiation ever observed is present in solar radiation, and even more so the claim that it comprises *all* of the possible spectrum. What, for example, about the radiation from which, many now believe, sprang all—that Big Bang?¹⁷ Aside from that objection, what comes after the word *contains* should be rephrased: *electromagnetic radiation of all wavelengths*.

* The portion of this radiation to which the retina of the human eye responds is called the visible light region of the electromagnetic spectrum.

The human eye also responds to radiation other than light. Notorious is the permanent damage ultraviolet radiation can do to the eye's retina. Why not use the active form to define visible light: *Visible light is the part of electromagnetic radiation that can be seen*? But shouldn't college students already know that?

* The fact that the radiation emitted by the sun contains a mixture of radiation wavelengths may be demonstrated by passing sunlight through a prism.

This sentence is off to a bad start with *The fact that* (Ref. 11, Ch.3). Replace *contains a mixture of radiation wavelengths* by *is a mixture of radiations differing in their wavelengths*. This assertion is predicated on the wave model of light, but there is also another model, one in which electromagnetic radiation is a stream of non-identical particles called *photons*. The demonstration is telling only for the visible part of electromagnetic radiation and does not betray which model is most correct. Before the wave and photon models of light were invented, Newton ascribed the prism's effect as due to white light being composed of particles of various masses. The sentence can be shortened, made active, and a false impression avoided by writing instead: *By passing Sunlight*

¹⁷ Steven Weinberg, *The First Three Minutes*. Bantam Books, 1977.

through a glass prism one may show it to be a mixture of colored lights.

- * A prism bends light; the degree to which light is bent is related to the wavelength of the light.

It isn't a prism that bends light; the light's bending comes from moving from one substance into another (from air to glass, say, or the other way around). How much bending depends on wavelength (if we contemplate the wave model of light) and also on the direction of the light beam relative to the boundary between the substances. The phrase *is related to* should be replaced by a more assertive *depends on*.

- * When sunlight (or other white light) containing all possible wavelengths is passed through a prism, each component color of the white light is bent to a different extent by the prism, resulting in the beam of white light being spread out into a complete rainbow of colors; this is called a continuous spectrum.

The semicolon should be replaced by a period because what follows it is a distinct statement. Most of what precedes the semicolon has been mentioned already. New here is only that the decomposition of light shows as a *rainbow of colors*, a phrase I would replace by *the colors of a rainbow*. Please, pardon me my subjectivity.

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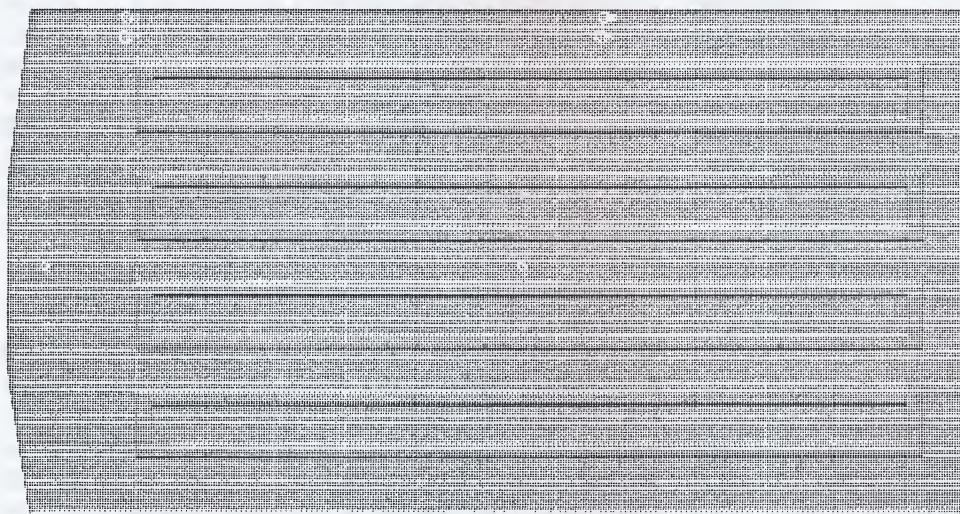
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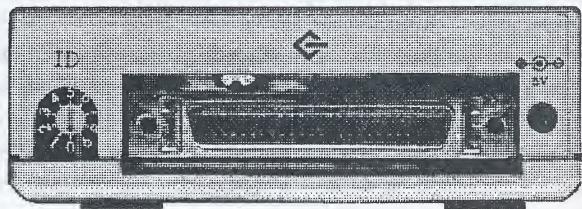
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GENIE[®]

NOTES

by Lou Rocha

As we eagerly await spring after this dreadful winter, thoughts of warmer weather and recreation help to buoy our spirits. I hope it is balmy wherever you are when you finally read this column. In this month's issue we will visit two new RoundTables on GENIE, review highlights of recent RealTime Conferences, investigate our Hot Topic of the month and meet two interesting members of the ST RoundTable—Damien Jones and Sandy Wolf.

Around GENIE

by Lou Rocha

This month we visit two relatively new RoundTables on GENIE—the WHITEHOUSE RT and the DISNEY RT. Before anyone asks, let me say that the choice to present them together is not meant as a political comment on either one *grin*.

WHITEHOUSE RT

To reach the WHITEHOUSE RT you have to go to page 1600. What else would you expect? This RT is set up as most GENIE RoundTables with a Bulletin Board, Library and Real-Time Conference area. There is also an area for reading the latest RT news and even for sending a letter to the White House! Subsidiary areas also provide access to travel services in case you want to deliver that letter in person!

The Library is building a collection of official White House announcements. These appear almost daily. If you need to "get it from the source," this RT's library should be in your Autopass 1 configuration.

In the Bulletin Board area, all members can discuss newscasts, policy decisions or other political items. As the sysops have noted, "This includes the President's economic stimulus package, the First Lady's hearings on the health care issue, the Vice President's message about the environment, cabinet appointments, summits and conferences held by the Administration and the President, and other Executive issues." I took a short tour through the various message areas and you would be very surprised at the depth of the discussions that are taking place. This RT is a must-check area for anyone who is studying Political Science, Communications, or Law. For the

rest, it provides the most timely views on politics that will make you the hit of your coffee clache!

DISNEY RT

Since I visit Disneyworld in Orlando regularly, I was most pleased to find this new RoundTable on GENIE. In this RT you can visit categories in the Bulletin Board that focus on each of the Disney attractions in Florida, California, Virginia, France and Japan. Other interesting areas include Disney Collectibles, Films and Videos, Software and the Disney Company itself. Among the hundreds of topics under discussion you will find the following: Internet Disney, The Disney Store, The Magic Kingdom Club, The Mighty Ducks of Anaheim, Beauty and the Beast & Broadway, Trading Cards, Clubs and Conventions and Theme Park Books.

Of course, the busiest topics are those that deal with specific Disney attractions. In the Walt Disney World (Florida) CATEgory, you can ask any question about all the theme areas: Magic Kingdom, EPCOT, MGM Studios, Pleasure Island, Typhoon Lagoon and Blizzard Beach. Other informative topics include Hours and Ticket Prices, Spectromagic Parade, Restaurants, WDW Village Hotels and Resort Hotels and Vacation Planning. You can even access Travel Services through this RT and make all the arrangements for your vacation.

The DISNEY RT is run by an eager group of Floridians who provide the answer to any question you have. They are most helpful and answer all e-mail with enthusiasm and accuracy. The DISNEY RT is just another reason to belong to GENIE!



RTC Highlights

by Brian Harvey



Welcome to another synopsis on the Real Time Conferences (RTC) in the Atari ST RoundTable on GENIE. This month I have a little more room to discuss the RTCs that took place during the last 30 days. However, first I wish to remind everyone that not all the action occurs during the formal RTCs. Just last Wednesday, Bob Brodie popped in and kept us up-to-date on the latest exciting news from Atari. You never know who will make an appearance at a RTC!

On Monday, January 24 Lou Rocha hosted CD-ROM RTC with quite a few special guests. Greg Kopchak from It's All Relative, opened the RTC with remarks about *Photo Show Pro*, which supports Kodak Photo CD on the Atari Falcon 030. This product allows you to make maximum use of the built-in hardware capabilities of the Falcon 030. *Photo Show Pro* has so many features that it is impossible to list them all here, but it is evident that it is a highly flexible means for making the most of your Falcon and Kodak Photo CDs.

Brian Grier announced that he has developed a program so that Atari owners can access Compton's New Media CD-ROMS on Atari computers. This program can access Compton's M.O.S.T discs such as "Book of Home Remedies," "The King James Bible," and the "CIA/KGB Information

Book." (M.O.S.T. stands for Multiple Operating System Technology.) Brian stated that it works very similar to the Windows™ version. For those not familiar with the Windows version, the Atari version will let you have as many sections open as you require, show pictures, and play STe/TT audio. Brian would like to make a version for Compton's Multi-Media encyclopedia but that depends on how this product is received.

Greg then went on and discussed some other aspects of CD-ROM technology. The CD is actually like a large hard drive and the media itself is really cross-platform. It is the developer who decides if the front end will support a particular platform such as the Atari. Dave Troy from Toad Computers gave some buyer hints on the difference between various speed CD-ROMs. Dave believes the faster units (quad and triple speed) "might be a wise choice" if you don't mind paying the extra for new technology. Roger Burrows, from Anodyne Software (*ExtenDOS* fame), added that "If you can afford it, go for the fastest. But I think the speed difference from single to double is enough for most of us poorer folks." Sean from Processor Direct asked what other practical uses an Atari user can make of CD-ROM. Greg answered first by commenting that a major use could be Desktop Publishing (DTP). He has a few hundred megs of clip art on one single CD-ROM. Gee, I know I could use something like that. Also, the new *Gemini CD* for the Atari (Walnut Creek) has fonts ready to go. BTW, I just received the *Gemini CD* in the mail and it looks real nice. Rene Guimont and Rene Tremblay created this CD-ROM for Atari computers and it contains 616 MB, and 2,872 public domain programs, shareware programs and commercial demos. Also, Photo CD is another use, which can then be imported, with the necessary module, into your favorite DTP such as *Calamus SL*. Dave commented that, with the Atari platform, the requirement is finding CD-ROMs that aren't platform specific. That is, to locate CD-ROMs that have data that you can use, such as Brian's interface for Compton's CD-ROMs and Photo CDs.

Mike Fulton was in attendance and commented on the CD Developer CD-ROM pack. Mike stated he has been working on it for several months. It is delayed since he has to edit and rewrite Atari's developer documentation. This time consuming process is making progress, but there is no release date yet.

Roger Burrows discussed what *ExtenDOS* does and how it is designed for users who do not need or want all the function of MultiTOS when using a CD-ROM player. This product is very reasonable in price, at a mere \$19.95 including taxes and shipping.

Nima Montase commented that you shouldn't forget that CD-ROMs can also play audio CDs on your system. Hence, you won't need a second CD to listen to while using your computer! Nima authored *CD_AUD20*, which is available as shareware, on GEnie, of course. He is presently working on a Falcon CD audio player, too.

As is my tradition, I always end off by discussing Bob Brodie's Dateline Atari RTC. On Friday, Feb. 4, 1994 Lou Rocha hosted the February edition of Dateline Atari. This

RTC was special in that it was the first time in months that Bob was NOT doing the RTC from some hotel room. Bob mentioned that Atari is really busy with the Jaguar. Also, after the Winter CES, they have had increased demand from retailers to carry the Atari Falcon030.

Another bit of good news is that Atari is expanding its staff in some key areas such as customer service, game test areas, finance, art department, and administration. The increase in personnel will mean more of the staff will be seen online and, by now, regular GEnie users will probably recognize some of these new faces.

I asked Bob about the future of the computer line for Atari and he confirmed that the computer line isn't dead and, in fact, there is an O40 board that could be available by April. This board is a third party product with few details available at this time. Also, a high rez video digitizer should be available around the same time frame. Unfortunately, he wasn't prepared to give any firm details of future computer products.

Bob commented that the CD-ROM player for the Jaguar will be out during the summer and that the VR Helmet is still being worked on but has no release date yet. He also went into detail on a lot of Jaguar related information and fielded quite a few questions about specific developers signing on to create for the Atari Jaguar. Naturally, he would not elaborate on any deal not already signed. Well, that's it for another month. Don't forget that we have a Dateline Atari the first Friday of every month and a Programming RTC on the first and third Thursday. In addition, we have our weekly RTCs; Sunday is the HelpDesk, every Monday night is Desktop Publishing and Graphics and, finally, Wednesday is Open House and formal RTCs. Until next month, happy computing!

Hot Topics
by Terry Quinn



This month's spotlight is on the discussion concerning *Geneva*, Gribnif Software's new multi-tasking operating program. Since it is a direct competitor to MultiTOS, this product is generating a lot of questions. For example:

G.LEONE—I've got three quick questions here—I don't have *Geneva* yet because I was wondering if it would really be useful on a 4-meg STe (everyone seems to always refer to installing it on their TT). Also, although I understand it'll work fine without *NeoDesk* (great article, Al—extremely helpful), are its features somewhat "impaired" by not having *NeoDesk*? Finally, does *Geneva* work with the latest release of *Word Perfect* for the Atari?

C.NICHOLLS [BILL] Gerry, beyond question, *Geneva* works and is useful on a 4 Meg STe. Al has answered the question about *Geneva* without *NeoDesk* at length, and there is even a text file of his about it in the library. Most people seem to find that the latest version of *Word Perfect* for the Atari will work under *Geneva*, except for two cosmetic problems, the busy icon of the mouse remains on until you do something, and the status line does not appear at the bottom of the screen. Addi-

tionally, I (running a perhaps atypical Mega STc 4 with TOS 2.05) find that it does not cope with more than one window—the windows cycle endlessly between each other. I don't know if anyone else has that problem.

A.FASOLDT [AI] Russ, I wrote the references to the DOS files, in hopes that the positive aspects of the autoexec.bat and config.sys would be emphasized. There is something to be said for a system that lets you edit the bootup parameters.

Gerry, thanks for the kudos, but I sense that my description of how *Geneva* does not need *NeoDesk* didn't explain things well enough. The features of *Geneva* are not impaired in any way by the absence or presence of one desktop or another. *Geneva* does not need *NeoDesk* for any of its functions, in any way, period, end of sentence. :)

It's not the functions of *Geneva* that are impaired if you don't have a desktop or a shell, but the functions of the desktop or shell. (I'm getting too obvious here—sorry!) Without a desktop or shell, there are some actions that are more difficult or that require add-ons. Offhand, these include: setting fast-load and other bits, viewing texts and launching applications by clicking on their data files. In other respects, *Geneva* by itself handles all the operations. *WordPerfect* runs fine here.

Many *Geneva* users are running it on an MSTe, including Dan Wilga himself. It takes up less than five percent of the RAM in a Mega STe.

Since *Geneva* (and multitasking in general) is new to the Atari platform, many of the questions this past month have dealt with "How to's" rather than "Will it's." In many cases, the notion of "putting a program to sleep" rather than terminating it is cause for some confusion.

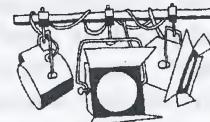
[WAYNE] I want to set it so that when a certain program (say a text editor) is not in the foreground, it automatically goes to sleep instead of using processor time.

T.FITZPATRICK [Tom] Wayne, sorry, but it's a two-step process right now. We're not going to let you get too lazy! First, you put the active program to sleep, then you 'top' the next window for use. You can put an application to sleep in several ways, some less troublesome than others. You mentioned one of the two possible using the Task Manager. I, personally, find the keyboard shortcut (exclusive of the TM) most convenient, but you might prefer the DA menu method. Or you can tear off the DA menu for a modified DA menu technique. Or use GEM.CNF. Manual section 4.1.7 (pp. 26-27) is devoted to this very topic.

*Should you go ahead and get *Geneva*? Judging from the myriad of messages, most new users are quite happy with it once they get used to the manner in which it works. While the message thread dealing with it is too long to quote here, the only significant weakness that has appeared so far has been that it doesn't work all that well with MIDI. Don't blame *Geneva* for this one, though, since most really powerful MIDI programs break all kinds of rules and multitasking depends upon applications following the gospel according to Atari.*

User Spotlight

by Lou Rocha



Sandy Wolf [S.WOLF4]

Most of the folks who hang around the ST RT are involved in using their Atari computers for hobby, entertainment and business purposes. Their involvement in the Bulletin Board usually involves asking or giving support for hardware and software items. However, there are also areas in which members chat about any number of diverse items from politics and religion to violence in videogames. One of the busiest non-computer topics contains a discussion on Atari stocks. There are a number of regular participants, and one of the leading voices is that of Sandy Wolf, whose insightful observations have interested many readers. Sandy's expertise is T/A, which is the acronym for Technical Analysis. His posts generally comment on patterns in the rise and fall of Atari stock and, with the breath-taking rise of ATC to \$12.00 two months ago, a lot of recent ATC stockholders have devoured Sandy's messages. Join us as we meet a very different Atari-an, Sandy Wolf.

Sandy, please begin with some background on your use of computers and your interest in T/A.

My first experience with digital computers was about 1960 with the IBM 650. I programmed it in machine language, and used it to help analyze data for my PhD thesis in high energy physics. I graduated to the IBM 704 and 709. When IBM was developing its first transistorized computers, the 7040 and 7090, they gave me occasional access to their prototypes—at 3:00 AM in Poughkeepsie, NY—to develop advanced data analysis programs which were then state-of-the art in high energy physics.

Eventually, I worked with an IBM 360 and was able to develop my own stock charting and analysis programs, which I wrote in a combination of Assembler and Fortran. I used to chart by hand all week, and then once a week, late at night, I got some free minutes on a 360 to do full scale analyses. This was before the first desktop computers came along and mainframes were still rare enough and expensive enough to make time on them a rare commodity.

My first Atari was the 1040 ST in 1987. I had already bought ATC stock on its original issue day in December, 1986. I upgraded to my present Mega ST2 soon after it came out. By that time, I had ceased doing heavy research, and used the Atari for various personal purposes, a few games, word processing, spreadsheet, BBSing, etc. Having done stock analysis by hand for several years, I started learning 'C' in order to program some stock analysis programs for the ST, but this never got very far. Tom Bushaw of Quidnunc Software published *Stalk The Market* and I adopted that; I demonstrated it to the NYC Atari Users Group led by Nevin Shalit. It is the only such program for Atari computers, and has its limitations; unfortunately, Tom Bushaw says he has no intention of upgrading it further.

How did you get involved with GEnie?

I virtually stopped all my computer use and financial analysis for a few years, until about two years ago. I then had the time and opportunity to get back into it. I signed onto GEnie and found much of interest: sailing topics in the hobby RT, financial topics in the Investors' RT, computer topics in both the ST and PC RTs, and others. I even got some interesting recipes from the Food & Wine RT. From time to time I drop into other RTs just to see what's doing, but in the past months I have had less time for this meandering as I have built up my financial analysis activities to an important-to-me level.

I now spend several hours every day using my Mega2 for various financial analysis activities, including ATC, and joining in the GEnie chit chat. The number of stocks I look at fairly closely each day is now about 20, although I am invested in only 12 at this time. Using the Mega2, I have gradually developed a new style for my personal investing, involving nightly data downloads from DJN/R and GEnie, and studying the vast amount of company and general business information available on DJN/R.

What software are you using these days?

My actual charting is done entirely with *Stalk The Market*, with occasional use of *LDW Power*. My communications program is *Stalker/Steno*. My investing success has greatly improved over the past year as I have learned how to use these facilities to better advantage. I have even gotten a few good investment ideas from right here on GEnie—the Investors RT mostly.

What is your main interest in this RoundTable?

I found my way into the Atari Stockholders' topic quite by accident. Most of my time in the ST RT was spent in two areas: the Gribnif category, where I gave them one bad time with all my problems getting going with *Stalker/Steno*, and the Stalk The Market topic. One day, someone on the STM topic suggested I visit the ATC topic. There I found Gene Windell holding forth about Atari's soon to be greatness, and most others poo-pooing him. I had sold my original Atari stock from 1986 several years ago—a reasonable, if small, profit. I was as skeptical as most, until one day I saw on DJN/R that Jack Tramiel had disposed of 1/2 his shares. That piqued my interest and, when the IBM contract was announced shortly afterwards, I began to believe something important might be coming along.

In spite of all the seemingly knowing talk by the guys in topic 44, it was clear to me that nobody really knew—or knows yet—anything about what was going on at Atari. The only way I could invest in ATC was by pure technical analysis methods. This gave me the further opportunity to get back in practice with my charting, which I had not done much of for a few years. I also felt that I could sharpen my technique by making public the analysis on GEnie, subjecting myself to all the embarrassment and ridicule that might come at me, especially if I was wrong too often. It actually worked out that way. I made a few early blunders, all of which were done in

public, but quickly corrected them and honed my technique. And it was great fun. You may have noticed the outcome. Not only did I manage a nice profit, but I made some friends around the NYC area, and met them in person after we all sold our ATC shares.

One entirely unexpected, but exciting, outcome was an invitation from John Gniewkowski to write a few articles for *GEnieLamp* about using the computer for investing. A few days later, another invite showed up from *AEO* to write about the ATC analysis I was doing in topic 44. If you did not read the *AEO* article, I suggest it to you as the best way of acquainting yourself with that analytical exercise and all that went with it. These opportunities have been delightful; I only hope others have found my stuff interesting. John G. recently extended my stay with *GEnieLamp* with a staff appointment, and now here I am being interviewed for *Current Notes*. It has all been quite mind boggling. My 15 minutes in the spotlight.

Are you planning to stick with your Atari computers?

I am now upgrading my computer facilities. I made a deal with someone I met through GEnie to buy his Mega STe4 with 50mb HD, TOS 2.06, 1.44 floppy, etc. This will replace my single floppy Mega 2. I expect to add a Syquest 105 and *AtariWorks*. However, all that will not make up for the lack of financial analysis programs for the Atari, and I will soon be getting a PC as well. I'm turning an entire bedroom in my apartment into an "office" for these computers and related facilities.

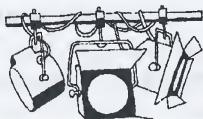
As an active shareholder in ATC, what advice would you give to the head honchos at Sunnyvale?

Frankly, I still haven't gotten over my long simmering frustration with the way they have mishandled their computer business, as is true of so many other users. When I first encountered Bob Brodie on GEnie, I really unloaded those years of frustration on him, and subsequently was probably a bit sassy in referring to "Papa Jack." If Atari's rise from the ashes on the back of the Jaguar is successful, I still won't be happy if they do not then live up to the technological potential they have demonstrated with their computers. That means they must learn something about how to do business.

Perhaps the best advice I could give them is to bring in new management at the very top and make a real business out of it, a la Apple. If this means the eventual departure of the Tramiels, a la Apple, that's fine with me. They could live very comfortably off their stock if the company can be made to work right. I had hoped that Time Warner might take a more forceful position in directing the company, now that they are the largest single shareholder. This seemed to me to be a natural. But I'm afraid that was only wishful thinking. I hope to make some more money from ATC stock no matter what they do. Then I will probably dismiss them from my mind if they don't shape up. By then, the PC computers will be just as much fun to use as a Mega STe.

Developer Spotlight

by Lou Rocha



Damien Jones [DMJ]

Damien Jones, whose speciality is graphics, is a regular member of the RoundTable. He has created a number of useful programs for viewing and converting graphics and has a commercial program called *VIEW II*, which replaces the desktop Show/Print function. More on this later.

Damien, what is your professional training in the computer field?

Heh. That's a good one. I started programming computers when I was 10. Mostly, it was Apple II systems that I could get to in school; one day my father brought home a Timex-Sinclair computer, and I learned that. I've even used TRS-80s. I saw my first ST when I was 14. (That gives you an idea of how old I am.) I learned GFA BASIC, and recently, assembly, mostly by myself.

I have no formal training in computers; I had a few high school and college classes in computers, but most of the time I knew more than the teacher. (I'll leave out the entertaining stories. ;-.) I've always been interested in graphics and sound, but again, almost everything I know in these areas I've learned myself through direct experimentation. Recently, I've come across a large amount of graphics programming information, and I'm still wading through it.

Can you tell us about your first commerical release?

Right now my only commercial product is *View II* (\$20 from It's All Relative). This product replaces the desktop's Show/Print/Cancel routine with something a whole lot better. It displays text, pictures, animations, sounds, and archive files (with some very nice viewers). When it's not showing a file, though, *View II* isn't using precious memory.

What other programs have you written?

I've written a number of Shareware and Freeware programs. *Sound Lab*, *DMJ GIF*, *Spc Thumb*, *ReNameIt!* (with Tom Hayslett), and the screen savers *Boink*, *Faze*, *Moire*, *Spin Dry*, and *Speckles*. There are also several little utilities like *MHz*, *StickyMouse*, and *Raw2Raw* that were written to fulfill specific requests. New versions of *View II* and *Sound Lab* are in the works, as well as an incredible graphics program.

What hardware and software are you using for computing?

I own both a PC and an Atari. The PC I use for my "real" job; it's a 486/50, 16M RAM, 500M hard drive, and SVGA card. The Atari I use because I like it. It's just a 1040STf with a 30 MB hard drive, but I'm continually amazed at how much more work I can get done on the Atari. I could continue the comparison, but somehow I don't think you have space for a few books' worth of anti-PC bias. <g>

For my development work on the Atari, I typically use quite a bit of software. I've got *Geneva*, *Warp 9*, *Data Diet*,

Squish II, and *NeoDesk* loaded, although not all at once; they don't quite fit into one meg with any reasonable amount left over. For the actual development, I use *GFA BASIC* and *Devpac 3*, with a few custom-built tools to make them fit together better.

What hobbies and interests do you have related to computing?

I like telecommunications. Most of the time I think that Atari would be totally dead if it weren't for GENie, although GENie users actually account for only a fraction of all Atari owners. I enjoy conversing with people online, and it's always a delight to go to a show and meet people in person. Usually they're completely different from what you expect, and that's good.

I also like to write. All of my published writing has been programming-related (oddly enough); I have a column in *AEO-PJ*, with the occasional extra piece, and a series of articles printed in the UK magazine *ST Applications*. I've toyed with the idea of writing programming books. I've even started, more than once. But I never finish before the Atari market seems to change, making what I would have written about obsolete.

What are your usual activities on GENie?

Normally, there are only two places on GENie I visit. The first is the e-mail section, and the second is the Atari RoundTable. I seem to have less time for everything since I started writing PC programs; on more than one occasion I've been asked to stop by other RTs and see what's going on, but I just don't have the time. I already filter out 75% of the ST RoundTable, and I probably spend an hour a day keeping up there. I try to answer programming questions when I can (or any other type of question, for that matter). I support all the programs I've written in the ST RoundTable, in CATegory 2, TOPic 6. This was started a couple of years ago by Rob Glover, before I even returned from Germany.

Do you have any message you would like to send to Sunnyvale?

Any idiot can tell you the Atari market is in dire straits. Atari does not advertise its computers. Atari makes it difficult for interested buyers to get those computers. Atari makes it hard for non-Atari owners to justify buying an Atari computer. I don't want to predict gloom and doom, so I won't. But I use and like Atari computers despite Atari, not because of them. Do not misinterpret me; there are some excellent people working at Atari. But Atari as a company has made a lot of mistakes.

On the other hand, Atari has an incredible opportunity in the Jaguar. The hardware is excellent, they seem to be advertising, and they seem to be bending over backwards to demonstrate they really have changed. Whether they have or not, and whether their success with the Jaguar will mean increased activity in the computer scene, remains to be seen.

While you're at it, any advice for GENie to help meet your telecom needs?

I'll be honest; there are a few things about GENie that irritate me. Sometimes the system pauses (on occasion for several minutes), and I understand this is because of system load; but it can be annoying. And uploading files is incredibly inefficient. (I transfer files through e-mail quite a bit, where upload time isn't free.) On the whole, though, I'd say GENie does very well.

When I call, it's either long-distance (at outrageous rates) or I call GENie's 800 number (still steep, but cheaper than LD). But the nearest town of any size—Hillsboro—is so small I wouldn't expect a local node to show up there any time between now and 2030. (By 2030 Dallas should have extended this far south. ;-)

One thing I'm very happy with has been the support of the ST RoundTable sysops. They are friendly, intelligent people who are always ready to help. For the most part it's a thankless job, but as I mentioned to Darlah a few days ago, if it weren't for the sysops, the RoundTable would degenerate into an unrecognizable mess.

Any final comments, Damien?

I don't make a secret of the fact that I write programs for the PC. I write multimedia CD-ROM software for Microsoft Windows. (Ack, I said the "M" word.) Most of what I do on

the PC, I learned to do on the Atari first. Most of what I do on the PC is easier on the Atari. As a matter of fact, it was my work on the Atari that got me my current job.

Do I love Atari computers? In a manner of speaking, yes. They have their flaws, as does any system, but my Atari has always done what I needed it to do, which is more than on my PC, and I don't foresee that changing any time soon. Choose your computer for whatever reason you like. I choose Atari.

Damien M. Jones, Route 1, Box 168, Milford, TX 76670.

Phones: Voice (817) 582-7373; FAX (817) 582-7377; BBS (817) 582-0672. GENie: DMJ / Internet: DMJ@genie.geis.com

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Programming on your Atari ST/STE/TT

Languages:

#071D ForthMacs and Forth 83
#263D Icon, Toy Prolog, Little Smalltalk, Xlisp, Xformer
#277D GNU C, Mark Johnson C, Proedit and Context2 editors
#305D M2/68 Modula-2
#378D ELAN 1.5 Programming Environment
#583D BC-FORTRAN 77 Ver 1.3C
#630S Prolog Language
#687D C-LISP
#744D Sozobon C V2.0
#745D Mark Johnson C, GNU C Binaries
#749D Pure Pascal Demo
#787D K&R C Compiler

Sample Source Code:

#093S Pascal Source Code #1
#133D C Source Code #1
#195S ST Language Disk
#223D C Source Code #2
#232D Modula-2 Source Code
#288D GNU Source I
#290D GNU Source II
#298D C Source Code #3
#299D Pascal Source Code #2
#627D GP>Edit Library Demo
#650D GFA BASIC source code, tutorials, manual
#727D GNU File Utilities-Binaries
#728D GNU File Utilities-Source
#730S Otto's Resource Construction Set
#803D GEM Fast programming libraries for the ST

Atari ST Music Disks

#237D Music Studio Song Disk
#296S Staccato Music Program
#327D SuperScore Demo V1.3
#466S 16-Voice Sequencer, Shareware by Henry Cosh
#496D Guitarist Demo, from chro-Magic
#498D Equinox SoundTracker Demo
#511S MIDI #1-MIDI Mike v1.0, Music Studio Song Player 1.2, MS Player
#527D Alchimie Jr music sequencer and Name That Tune game (uses data disks #528 or #529)
#528S Name That Tune Song Disk #1
#529D Name That Tune Song Disk #2
#594D MIDI #2-DigiPlay Plus, Esion demo, MIDI Music Maker 2, Robo_Bop, ST Noise
#635D MIDI #3-EZ-Score Plus demo, Patterner V1.3 demo, Back Trak, Jukebox V1.1
#694D Quartet Player 3 and Amodel Demo
#732D Roland MT-32-Music Studio demo for Roland MT32 includes 27 songs and Audio Light slide show.
#746D Sound Merlin V1.0-Comprehensive sample, sequence, and drum-kit editor.
#748D DigiSTUFF-Digital Keyclick v2.0, Beep v2.0, Digivec, QD Play, ST2Hippo V1.2, Hippo2ST V1.22, Sparc2ST V1.0, Mix v1.0
#788D Sound Lab V1.1-Sample editor; edit most any type of sample, and record with your ST Trplay of Paandal cartridge.
#811D Octalyser (STe only)--STe Music Editor
#825D MIDI #4--Robo Bop demo, Paula v2.2a, PT Player, Midi Music Maker, ProTracker v2.1a

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CN DOM-0 – February 1994

This disk includes the latest versions of two of the most popular compression programs for the Atari. The files are not compressed and are ready to use. One or both of these programs will be needed to uncompress files on other disks in the CN library.

ST ZIP v2.4 (c) Vincent Pomey 1990-1993. STZip is a program that allows you to compress and decompress files, i.e. to reduce their lengths. You save space on your disks and reduce the transmission time if you send the files by modem. It also allows you to group several files in one single file, whose extension in general is ZIP. STZip uses files that are compatible with PKZip 2.04 on the IBM PC, and the Unix Info-Zip programs Zip 1.9/Unzip 5.0.

LZH v2.99. Latest version of LHARC from Christian Grunenberg now includes an English language shell that takes advantage of all LHARC features and allows you to compress and uncompress files with ease. Includes an English manual plus complete documentation.

CN DOM-1 – March 1994

All files on this disk are compressed in ZIP format.

Ascii-View, v3.75, © 1989-1991 by David M. Seberg. Text viewing program developed to replace the boring, plain, dull, monotonous, inflexible [Show]-[Print]-[Cancel] feature of the standard ST Desktop.

Clock, (c) 1994 by Robert Stiles. Clock displays an analog clock on your monitor.

Grammarians, V1.4.0, by Dan Panke. Examine text files for word usage, spelling, and grammatical rules.

Magic Spell, V2.1, by T. Savino. Shareware spelling game/program for young and old alike.

MasterBrowse v3.5, (C) 1993, 1994 by Michel Forget, Electric Storm Software, The *BEST* ST/STE/TT/Falcon/MultiTOS Text File Viewer!

Recipe Box, (C) 1993 by Anthony Watson. The Recipe Box provides easy entry, storage, and access to all your favorite recipes. Shareware.

Sleuth, (C) 1993 by MajicSoft, Inc. Colorful arcade action fun game created with M.A.G.E.

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#874/#875: Towers (2 disk set) TOWERS is a complete game with all the functions intact. You can progress through the game to a certain point before you need the manual. Works on ST/STE/Mega/TT/Falcon computers; Req 1 MB. You can play two players via Null modem or Midi cables.

#876: Color Games. LANDMINE—A strategy game based on a popular game for that other computer. It runs in low or high res. MATCH_UP—For 1-4 players, this colorful game lets you test your memory skills. Young children are deadly at memory games, so BEWARE! Shareware; ST Low res only. PEARL_93—Super Dark Pearl is a new game by Majic Soft created with their new M.A.G.E. (Magic Arcade Game Machine) software. This is a Demo version of this 3D game with 10 levels. HTU—“Highscore Terminal Utility” is a nice little database to maintain your high scores in your favorite video games. Shareware.

#877: Second GFA Basic Manual. 3rd Edition. These files are a collection of example code and text files that will, hopefully, help you with GFA Basic. All files compressed with ZIP.

#878: Binkleyterm. First full release of BinkleyTerm ST from the new author (Otto Braendli). This disk includes the Binkley program, docs, i/o drive (1.8), and optomized high speed serial routines for both MFP and SCC driven serial ports. Several changes have been made to the code including removal of all errors generated during compiling, ANSI C functions now used, etc.

#879: Utility #28: A host of small utilities provided by Atari Explore Online. AFMT, ALASPEC, BIT, BITMASTR, BLKOUT, BOMB, BRDLFRMT, COLOREMU, COPY-CART, CPBOOT, DISKDOUB, DSKFIL20, F11GEM, FASTER2, FCPY_III, FIXDISK, FLEXCOPY, FLIP, FM-TUTIL, FORMATTP, KILLDRV, KNUTSOFT, MUTATE, PCFORMAT, PD_QUICK, SALVAGE, SPECSTUF, STDUP, STMIOR2, SUPER, TASKCOPY, UNFORMAT, UNHIDER.

#880: Utility #29: More utilities provided by AEO. BELLTST2, B_BOOT, CDC220, DECOMPRESS, DF_SUITE, DISKSCAN, DSKMAP, DSKSPEED, DSKSWICH, FASTFIND, FF, FOLDERSRT, GCLOCK, HDDIRECT, HDWBOOT, ICONES, KBD, LOAD_INF, MAKES12, MAPMEM, MEMCHECK, MEMFREE, MEMTEST, MINIVIEW, RESET, RSC_VIEW, SEL_PROG, TOS_VERS.

#881: Utility #30: Still more utilities from AEO plus others. ARDVARK, AUTO_SET, BKITE110, BOOTSIE, CLEO,

CPP2, JOSHUA, SDDFR_12, SHORTBIN, SINF158, SPLITIT, SUPRSHUF, TIMECODE, TVST15, UNDOUB, UNIX2DOS, UNIXFLOP, VECSHOW, WO

#882: Shocker2—Shareware game from Germany that runs in ST monochrome mode, with a separate program file that runs in mono mode on the TT and Falcon. Manipulate the marble to get a hold of hearts in each level, avoiding the traps and monsters along the way. Can play in one or two-player mode, two player mode can be done via MIDI or the modem ports. 100 levels, with an extra 100 levels in two-player mode. Very stunning graphics.

#883: Atari Works No.4: AWHP3ENV—template for printing addresses onto standard size envelopes from an Atari Works database to an HP3Ip printer, using Print Merge in Works. AW_ROTAT—Text rotation in AtariWorks? It's really simple; find out how it's done. AW_HMINV—AtariWorks Home Inventory Database template and tutorial. Created to help me figure out the calculated fields options is AW Database. AWNO10MP—How to print #10 Envelopes on the Hewlett Packard LaserJet 4 MP, by Richard Brown. AW_FNFNT—by Michael Hebert, here are 17 Calamus fonts converted to GEM fonts for use with AW. Includes tutorial. CN_DATA—Several AW data bases, courtesy of Current Notes. Includes 1993 CN index, Atari vendors, Atari retail stores, and CN Library.

#884: Marcel V2.2—The Marcel Word Processor is now Shareware! Marcel v2.2 is packed with new features like paragraph sorting and line centering, PostScript output, revamped print options, improved text insertion, to name but a few. And it even has a built-in screen saver! Marcel v2.2 requires 512KB RAM (1MB recommended), 1 720KB diskette drive, and medium resolution screen or better. It is Multi-TOS-compatible and uses RTF format for file exchange with AtariWorks, MS-Word, etc.

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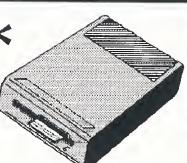
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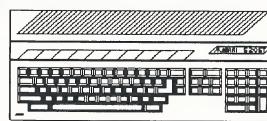
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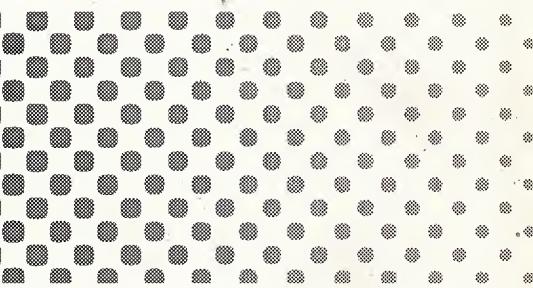
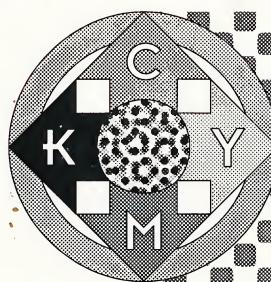
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